



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. .... Copyright No. ....

Shelf BS:650

M6

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











# NATURAL LAWS

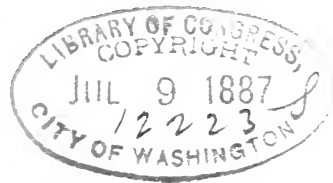
AND

## GOSPEL TEACHINGS.

BY

✓  
HERBERT W. MORRIS, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE," "TESTIMONY OF THE  
AGES," ETC.



*AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,*

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

1887

R

BS650  
N.6

COPYRIGHT, 1887,  
BY AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

# CONTENTS

---

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The Records. The Ordeals. The Weapons and Fields of Conflict. The Object of the Volume .....	5
--	---

## PART I.

### NATURE'S RECORD AND THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

I. Coincidence as to Localities .....	12
II. Coincidence as to Vegetation .....	39
III. Coincidence as to Living Creatures .....	48
IV. Coincidence as to Climate .....	57
V. Conclusion .....	60

## PART II.

### NATURAL LAWS AND THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

I. The Subject stated .....	66
II. Miracles an Essential Part of Christianity.....	66
III. Miracles not Impossible .....	68
IV. Objections to Miracles.....	70
V. Evidence for Miracles in Nature .....	77
VI. Character of the Evidence for Christ's Miracles.....	93
VII. The Criteria of Christ's Miracles.....	95
VIII. Witnesses for the greatest of Gospel Miracles.....	97
IX. Historic Evidence for Christ's Miracles.....	101
X. The Character of Christ an Evidence for his Miracles..	106

## PART III.

## NATURAL LAWS AND ANSWER TO PRAYER.

I. Prayer a Duty and a Privilege .....	109
II. Objections Urged against Prayer .....	111
III. Prayer the Voice of Nature .....	114
IV. Prayer Answered by Influence on Minds .....	120
V. Prayer Answerable through Invariable Laws .....	130
VI. Answer to Prayer and the Conservation of Force.....	137
VII. Conclusion.....	143

## PART IV.

## NATURAL LAWS AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

I. The Resurrection a Doctrine of Revelation .....	146
II. Difficulties presented by the Doctrine .....	147
III. How the Body is built up .....	149
IV. How the Body is dissolved and changed.....	152
V. What becomes of the Material Body.....	154
VI. Scripture statements verified .....	157
VII. The Builder of this Earthly Tabernacle .....	159
VIII. The properties of the Body that shall be .....	164
IX. To every seed his own Body .....	169

## PART V.

## NATURAL LAWS AND THE FINAL CONFLAGRATION.

I. The Subject stated .....	173
II. The Element that shall Destroy the World .....	175
III. Conflagration of other Worlds.....	183
IV. Past Destructions and Renovations of our Planet.....	185
V. The New Earth and New Heavens.....	188
VI. The Dwellers of the New Earth.....	191

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

---

IN the New Testament we have four distinct narratives of the Life of the GREAT TEACHER, Jesus of Nazareth. These were written by four different authors, each of whom professes to give, to the extent of his plan and purpose in writing, a true account of his birth and parentage, habits and character, teachings and miracles, sufferings and death.

No records, no writings of any character, ancient or modern, have been so closely studied or been subjected to such varied and severe criticism as have these four brief biographies. The ordeal through which they have passed is without a parallel in the history of literature. Nothing that is embraced in them, nothing that is connected with them, has escaped the most searching scrutiny. The facts which they relate, the doctrines which they teach, the references they make to social habits and civil rulers, the principles of ethics and science and philosophy which they involve, the dates and localities they name, together with every item and incident they contain, have all been subjected to the severest examination by



all orders of intellect for eighteen centuries. No means or method that can well be conceived has been left unemployed by their enemies to disprove their claims, to overthrow their authority, and to oppose their influence.

The ground and method adopted to oppose and undermine the gospel have ever changed with the changes of time. Old fields having been found untenable and old weapons having proved powerless, others supposed to be more promising have been taken up in their stead. This has taken place again and again. In the last age the most powerful assaults made were on the ground of metaphysics. In our own day the battle is mainly waged on the field of the *physical sciences*; and here the most specious and threatening attacks that have ever assailed the gospel have been made. On this field it is attempted to set the record of matter against the record of the Spirit, to oppose the laws of nature to the laws and miracles of Christ, and to array the forces of nature against the very foundations of providence and prayer and hope of resurrection to a better life. And it is to a consideration of these last attacks made on the Christian faith that the following pages are devoted. In them we hope to offer abundant proof that the foundation of our faith still standeth strong and to present facts that will enable the

Christian reader to give a scientific as well as a Scriptural reason for the hope that is in him.

As a fitting introduction to what is to follow and as affording an indisputable corroboration of the truth and accuracy of the gospel narratives, our first chapter shall be occupied with a presentation of the complete coincidence of the evangelists' statements with those of recent explorers in relation to the physical features, natural productions, cities and villages, streams and routes, of the land in which the scenes of the gospel were enacted. The testimony which nature thus bears can neither be gainsaid nor resisted, and the minute and perfect accuracy of the Scriptures as thus tested confirms our confidence in their truthfulness where we have not the same means of testing them.



# NATURAL LAWS

AND

## GOSPEL TEACHINGS.

---

### PART I.

#### NATURE'S RECORD AND GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

BETWEEN history and geography, between events and localities, there is always a real and necessary connection, and the latter serve not only to explain, but also to corroborate, the former. Wherever a narrative or transaction is involved in the conditions of a place or spot still accessible and open for examination, there we have an element of evidence for the narrative or transaction which is substantial and not to be set aside. "Facts," says Prof. Stanley, "are stubborn, and geographical facts happily the most stubborn of all. We cannot wrest them to meet our views, but neither can we refuse the conclusions they force upon us. It is by more than a figure of speech that natural scenes are said to have 'wit-

nessed' the events which occurred in their presence. They are 'witnesses' which remain when the testimony of men and books has perished. They can be cross-examined with the alleged facts and narratives. If they cannot tell the whole truth, at any rate, so far as they have any voice at all, they tell nothing but the truth." The correctness of these observations is abundantly exemplified in the topography of every land whose ancient history has come down to us with any degree of accurate detail, but in that of no country more strikingly than in Palestine.

Palestine, the land of the Saviour's birth and ministry and the scene of all the events and doings related by the evangelists, within the last fifty years has been visited by great numbers of intelligent men, learned historians, and experienced naturalists of every shade of faith and of every type of unbelief. It has been studiously explored again and again from one end to the other; its ancient sites and ruins, its lakes and streams and mountains, its climate and soil and productions, have all been carefully studied, and latterly its whole extent has been accurately surveyed and mapped by a scientific corps sent out from England. In short, not a spot of ground, not a vegetable growth, not a living species of beast or bird or insect, has been left unstudied that

is mentioned in either of the four Gospels. And the result of all this has been that the harmony between the simple statements and incidental allusions of the evangelists and the present features and products of the land is found to be so striking and complete, that it stands now an acknowledged fact that these writers must have been citizens of this country and must have been dwellers in it at the time of which they speak and familiar with the scenes they describe.

Here, then, are evidences in support of the gospel narratives which no theory or interpretation can controvert or deny. Nor is this all. The warp and woof of a piece of tapestry are not more closely related to the forms and figures displayed upon it than are the physical features of Palestine to the events and doings of the gospel history. Its journeys and discourses, parables and miracles, are so involved in the conditions, surroundings, or imagery of the localities where they transpired that a glance at these as they still exist is sufficient to carry conviction to all candid minds that in those Gospels they are reading, not myths or legends, but real history, and that they are following, not a phantom hero, but a living Man who trod the ground on which they stand, heard the murmur of the waves and streams which fall upon their own ears, and looked upon the scenes on

which their own eyes now gaze. To be convinced of all this let us now follow the footsteps of the blessed Redeemer as he went through the cities and villages preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

#### I. COINCIDENCE AS TO LOCALITIES.

BETHLEHEM.—The gospel history opens with the joyful announcement, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” This city of David (Bethlehem) still remains with its name scarcely changed, being now called Beit-lahm. It is situated some six miles south of Jerusalem, on a narrow ridge, with creeping vineyards along its slopes and cornfields below. At the distance of about a mile east is a little plain, now marked by the “Chapel of the Herald Angel” as possibly the place where grazed the flocks over which the shepherds kept watch by night. The site of Bethlehem and the whole surrounding scene are in perfect agreement with all we read of them in the sacred history. There exists no doubt of its identity, nor has there ever been a doubt.

EGYPT.—Warned of the murderous design of Herod, “Joseph took the young child and his



mother by night and departed into Egypt." From Bethlehem Egypt was the nearest and most natural place of refuge to which they could flee. It could be reached in three or four days; and once on the farther bank of the winter stream which marked its boundary, they would be beyond the reach of Herod's jurisdiction.

NAZARETH.—Informed of the death of Herod, Joseph ventured to leave Egypt and to return to the land of Israel; but, as he drew near, learning that Archelaus reigned in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither, and by divine direction "he turned aside into the parts of Galilee and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth." And there, according to the evangelists, was the home of Jesus from his infancy to his manhood. And this place, like Bethlehem, has preserved his memory through all the centuries and remains to this day a visible witness for the reality of his person and the truth of his history. In its present site and aspect every statement and allusion of the evangelists finds its full and clear confirmation. Its name, *En-Nazirah*, is the same as that given it in Matthew 2:23. It is built on a hillside, as described in Luke 4:29. It is situated within the province of Galilee, as stated in Mark 1:9. It is near to Cana, as intimated in John 2:1, 2, 11. Behind and above it is

a precipice, steep and forty feet high, corresponding to that described in Luke 4:29, to which his enraged fellow-townsmen led him, purposing to cast him down thence to destroy him. Its site stands nearly 1,500 feet higher than that of Capernaum, so that when he visited the latter place, as stated in Luke 4:31 and in John 4:47, he literally "went down" to Capernaum. So correct and definite are the statements of the gospel narratives; yet all these topographical facts are mentioned merely incidentally therein; the correspondence, therefore, between the statements and the facts as now found existing is all the more wonderful and convincing.

JERUSALEM.—According to the national custom, Joseph and Mary visited Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. Arrived at the age of twelve years, when Jewish boys began to assume the responsibilities of the law, Jesus accompanied his parents to celebrate this feast at the great city. The existence of Jerusalem and the identity of its site at this day are too well known to require any proof. The observance of the feast over, they set out in company with a multitude of others to return, but "the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's jour-

ney; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him." "Among such a sea of human beings," says Dr. Farrar, "how easy would it be to lose one young boy. The incident constantly occurs to this day in the annual expeditions of the pilgrims to bathe in the fords of Jordan and among the hundreds of Mohammedans whom I have seen at Easter streaming southwards to the tomb of Moses." "Went a day's journey:" this expression implies that the entire journey would occupy several days, and so it did, for the whole distance was about eighty miles. The first day's journey by caravan is often but a few miles. Here, then, again localities, time, distance, and circumstances are all perfectly coincident with the gospel narratives.

BETHABARA.—From Jerusalem Jesus returned home with his parents. After this nothing is related of him till he was thirty years old, when he left Nazareth and went down to receive baptism at the hands of John. This was "at Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." In the Revised Version this is rendered Bethany. No visible mark remains to indicate the spot, but from a consideration of all the facts mentioned in connection with it, and especially from the signification of the name, which is "House of ford," it is

thought by some to have been at the upper ford of Jordan, on the east side, and not far south of Lake Tiberias. It was "in the wilderness," we are told, that John administered this rite, and the retired solitude of that deep valley was and still is truly such. It was on the banks of the Jordan that Jesus joined the assembled multitude, and that stream still flows between its banks as of yore. The tall "reeds shaken with the wind" are still there. And the bare "stones" still lie around from which the Baptist said God was "able to raise up children unto Abraham."

SCENE OF THE TEMPTATION.—The baptism of Christ was immediately followed by his mysterious temptation. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." He was now on the east bank of Jordan, and from thence "was led up," that is, up to the desolate hills beyond. "And he was there with the wild beasts;" the undisturbed thickets and caves of that region to this day make it the favorite haunt of such creatures. There the tempter bade him "command that these stones be made bread;" and at many a spot the ground is still strewn with stones of every size and form. "And the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world;" and there, a little north of the Jabbok,

just such a high mountain is found, from the summit of which a most extended prospect of the whole surrounding region is presented; the heights of Lebanon, the Sea of Galilee, the plain of Esdraelon, Mt. Carmel, the Mediterranean, and the whole range of Judah and Ephraim are distinctly visible. Prof. Palmer pronounces it the finest view he ever saw in any part of the world. And Dean Stanley says of it, "It is in all probability the view which furnished the framework of the vision of 'all the kingdoms of the world' which was revealed in a moment of time to Him who was driven up from the valley below to these mountains at the opening of his public ministry."

CANA.—The temptation ended, the Saviour returned from the wilderness to the scene of his baptism at the fords of Jordan. Seeing him approaching, the Baptist said to those that stood by, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" In virtue of this memorable testimony two Galileans at once became the disciples of Christ, and on the next day three more. Accompanied by these he returned to Galilee. "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage." Here made he the water into wine. This village still exists under the slightly altered

name Kenna, and agrees in all the few particulars given of the place where Jesus performed this his first miracle. It is in the province of Galilee, as stated in John 2:1; it is near to Nazareth, as intimated by the same, 2:2, being only four and a half miles distant, and it stands on higher ground than Capernaum, as is implied in the words, "After this he went down to Capernaum."

JACOB'S WELL.—A few months after the above occurrence Jesus, it is related, went up to Jerusalem to observe the Passover, and on his return "he must needs go through Samaria, and cometh to a city which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being weary with his journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink," etc. John 4. This incident, together with the conversation with the woman, and the interesting and important discourse with the disciples to which it gave rise, as related by St. John, grew naturally out of the local situation where the Saviour on his journey found himself at the noonday hour; and all the roots of the story, instead of springing from some mythic or legendary brain, intertwine among the very peculiarities of the place, which still remain

for examination and comparison. In passing from Jerusalem to central Galilee, whither Jesus was now going, the traveller still "must needs pass through Samaria," and pass, too, "near to Sychar," or where Sychar stood, of which traces are yet discernible. "Jacob's well" is still there, for the most part hewn in the solid rock, but near the surface incased in masonry. That "well is deep" still, not less than seventy-five feet, though much rubbish has fallen in and accumulated at the bottom. Fragments also of the temple still remain on "this mount" of Gerizim, in which the Samaritans said "men ought to worship." The rich "grain-fields" still spread in prospect from the spot as when "he sat weary at the well." In short, all the essential features of the scene, as described by the evangelist, remain unto this day. "On Sunday afternoon," says Prof. H. B. Tristram, "we mounted the edge of the old vault and read together John 4. That chapter read by this well brings vividly home the accuracy of the evangelist. No other spot could so perfectly harmonize all the incidents of the inspired narrative. The very ruins are in keeping with it." The spot is undisputed and indisputable; Jews and Samaritans, Christians and Mohammedans, are agreed concerning it.

After a stay of two days at Sychar Jesus re-



sumed his journey, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom as he advanced, until he reached his home in Galilee. Being rejected with rage and violence by his townsmen on the following Sabbath, he bade a final adieu to Nazareth and made his future home beside the sunlit waters of the Lake of Galilee.

BASIN OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.—“Leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast.” The country bordering upon this beautiful lake in the early part of the first century, as we have abundant historical evidence, was widely different in its condition and aspect from what it is at the present day. It was then occupied by a large and busy population. The soil was fertile and well cultivated everywhere, and bore rich crops of grain and all manner of delicious fruits. Every quarter exhibited a scene of activity and thrift. Its shores were adorned with numerous cities and villages. Some of these stood out conspicuously on the clear banks, and some lay half hid in the foliage of the receding hillsides. Everywhere the beach sparkled with the houses and palaces of the Roman inhabitants or with the dwellings and synagogues of the Jews. At various points the arms and armor of drilling garrisons or standing sentinels were seen glittering in the sunshine. Along the

water's edge were heard the resounding strokes of the busy shipbuilders at every convenient spot. From the cities and villages fishermen went forth by scores and hundreds over the lake, which abounded with fish. With the boats of these mingled many vessels of traffic and pleasure. In a word, the basin of the Sea of Galilee was a focus of life and activity. Nowhere else, except perhaps at Jerusalem itself, could Jesus have found such a field for his gracious ministry; from no other centre could "his fame" have so readily spread "throughout all Syria;" and nowhere else could he have drawn around him the vast multitudes who hung on his lips, "from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan."

In this populous region where the evangelists place the Saviour everything is in perfect harmony with the gracious end of his ministry and with all the localities and incidents they describe. Here was the "Way of the Sea," the great caravan road that ran along its western shore. Here were multitudes "sitting in darkness and in the region and shadow of death," who stood in dying need of "the great light" which he brought into the world. Here were "the publicans sitting at the receipt of custom," Capernaum being the divergent point of the roads to Tyre, to Damascus, to Jerusalem, and to Sepphoris, the busy centre of

merchandise, and therefore the natural place for the collection of tribute and taxes. Here were "the women who were sinners," drawn from heathen cities or corrupted by heathen manners. Here were Roman "centurions under authority," issuing their stern commands to soldiers and servants. And here, too, were hardy "fishermen toiling through the night" and "washing" or "mending their nets" during the day. In a word, here were found in actual existence and living reality, to their minutest particulars, all things that are described or named in the gospel narratives.

In reading the gospel history of the Saviour's ministry in this notable field, our first and last and vivid impression is, not that we are tracing the misty movements of a legendary or fictitious character, but following the steps and witnessing the deeds of a living Man in contact with living men, and in close and immediate connection with the localities known to have existed there.

CAPERNAUM.—"He came and dwelt in Capernaum." Here, as the evangelists relate, he taught the people and wrought many miracles. The doom which our Lord pronounced against it has been so signally fulfilled that its very site even now remains a matter of dispute. The gospel narratives state that it was a city, that it was sit-

uated on the northern shore of the lake, that it was on the west side in or near the land of Genesaret, and that it had a synagogue built by a Roman centurion at his own expense. In 1870 the English explorers, Capt. Wilson and his associates, discovered, at a spot called Tell Hâm, ruins of walls and foundations covering a space half a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide, in which all the above conditions seemed to meet and which they believed to be the site of Capernaum. Among the ruins were those of a synagogue in a state of fine preservation, remarkable for its elegant architecture and belonging to an age at least as early as that of Christ. Speaking of the work of excavation in and around this building, Capt. Wilson says, "It was in this synagogue that our Lord delivered the discourse recorded in John 6, and it was not without a certain strange feeling that in turning over a large block we found the 'pot of manna' engraved on its face and remembered these words in that discourse: 'I am the Bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead.' " To that engraved figure turned up by the English explorer the very finger of Jesus perhaps was pointed as he uttered these memorable words.

CHORAZIN.—This place is often mentioned in connection with Capernaum and as being in its

neighborhood. And two miles north of Tell Hûm are found ruins answering all the demands of the gospel history and still bearing the name Khorazy, which, according to Dr. Thomson, is the Arabic form of Chorazin. On visiting the spot, "Here we are," says he, "among the shapeless heaps of Chorazin, which attest most impressively the fulfilment of that prophetic curse of the Son of God. It is just where we might expect to find it."

BETHSAIDA.—In the sacred narratives Bethsaida is associated with Capernaum and Chorazin as being a neighboring town and doomed to the same woe. It is also said to have been the city of Andrew and Peter, who were fishermen, and fishing, as its name (House of Fish) implies, was the chief occupation of its inhabitants. Two miles east of Tell Hûm and three miles southeast of Khorazy, at the debouchure of the Jordan into the lake, Dr. Thomson found a heap of ruins, which in all the above particulars answers to the Bethsaida of the gospel, and which therefore he considered to be its true site.

COUNTRY OF THE GERGESENES.—Our Lord on a certain occasion, being weary with incessant labors in the populous neighborhood of the above cities, took ship and sought rest on the more quiet eastern side of the lake, in the district

of the Gergesenes. Here, it is related, Matt. 8:28, etc., immediately on his landing he met and healed two furious demoniacs coming out of the tombs, and suffered the evil spirits that possessed them to enter into a herd of swine, which, under their diabolical influence, rushed into the lake and perished. Now on that very coast Dr. Thomson found a little prostrate town, called Gersa, whose position and surroundings answer in all particulars to the account given by the evangelists. This is his statement: "The present name, as pronounced by the Bedouin Arabs, is very similar to that given by Matthew. It is within a few rods of the shore, and an immense mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs, out of some of which the two men possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain that the swine, rushing madly down it, could not stop, but would be hurried on into the water and drowned. Take your stand a little south of this Gersa. A great heard of swine, we will suppose, is feeding on this mountain that towers above it. They are seized with a sudden panic, rush madly down the steep declivity, those behind tumbling over and thrusting forward those before, and as there is neither time nor space to recover on the narrow shelf between the base and the lake, they are crowded

headlong into the water and perish. All is perfectly natural just at this point, and here, I suppose, it did actually occur."

THE DESERT PLACE.—Some time after the above occurrence, on receiving the news of the murder of John the Baptist, saddened and weary, Jesus with his disciples left Capernaum "and departed thence by ship into a desert place apart; and when the people had heard thereof they followed him on foot out of the cities." They went round the end of the lake and gathered about him on the opposite side, and there, after delivering to them various instructions, he fed five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes. And here again we quote Dr. Thomson, who from years of residence is perfectly familiar with this whole region. "Here, at the end of the plain El Bâtîlah, this bold headland marks the spot, according to my topography, where the five thousand were fed. From the four narratives of this stupendous miracle we gather, 1st, that the place belonged to Bethsaida; 2d, that it was a desert place; 3d, that it was near the shore of the lake, for they came to it by boat; 4th, that there was a mountain close at hand; 5th, that it was a smooth, grassy spot, capable of seating many thousand people. Now all these requisites are found in this exact locality and nowhere else, so far as I can discover. This



Batîlah belonged to Bethsaida. At this extreme southeast corner of it the mountain shuts down upon the lake bleak and barren. It was doubtless desert then as now, for it is not capable of cultivation. In this little cove the boats were anchored. On this beautiful sward at the base of the rocky hill the people were seated to receive from the hands of the Son of God the miraculous bread."

LAND OF GENNESARET.—Immediately after the above miracle and about sunset the disciples, at their Master's command, set out to return in their boat to Capernaum, but a violent wind springing up in the night drove them out of their course, during which Jesus joined them, walking on the sea, and in the morning they reached the shore in the land of Gennesaret at a point some little distance south of Capernaum. The situation and features of this land, a rich and beautiful little plain, are so definitely and clearly described by Josephus and others as to identify it for ever with what is at present called El Ghuweir. "Not the slightest question can arise," says Prof. Tristram, "as to the identification of Gennesaret with the modern El Ghuweir."

MAGDALA.—"Having sent the multitude away, he took ship and came to the coasts of Magdala." This was the home of Mary, whose brief

but touching story is familiar in every Christian land. It was situated in the southeast corner of the plain of Gennesaret, and there its site is still marked by ruins and a few miserable hovels. Its present name is Mejdel.

TIBERIAS.—This in the time of the Saviour was a city of royal magnificence, having been built by Herod Antipas in honor of the Emperor Tiberius. Its site is now occupied by the modern town Tabariyeh, where abundant traces of its ancient grandeur may be seen in sculptured granite and broken columns half buried in the rubbish.

NAIN.—During his ministry in the neighborhood of the Sea of Galilee our Saviour made several excursions to the surrounding cities and villages. On one occasion he left Capernaum and went as far as Nain in Galilee, twenty-five miles distant. “Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak.” The site of this village is and always has been well known; it is on the north-

western edge of the hill called Jebel ed-Duhy. Its name Nain, now Nein, means "fair," and its situation, nestling picturesquely on the hill-slopes of the graceful mountain and full in view of Tabor and the heights of Zebulun, justify the flattering title. The entrance to the village must always have been up the steep and rocky ascent from the plain; and here the Saviour with the multitude that followed him met the sad procession issuing from the gate to bury the young man outside the walls, as is still the custom of the people. On the east side the rock is full of ancient sepulchral caves, to one of which doubtless the body of the young man was now being carried for burial. The whole pathetic narrative is in complete accord with the character of the place as seen at this day.

TYRE AND SIDON.—On another occasion we read that Jesus, perhaps seeking both safety and repose, "withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon." The existence and the sites of these two ancient cities of Phœnicia have always been too well known to require proof. Their ruins still remain and are familiar to the traveller. From Capernaum the former is distant in a straight line about 35 miles, and the latter about 47 miles. The only incident mentioned in connection with this excursion is the healing of the daughter of a

“Syrophœnician woman,” or, as Matthew terms her, “a woman of Canaan.” The terms Canaan and Phœnicia had succeeded one another as geographical names of the same district of country, and, as we learn from ancient authors, Phœnicians were often called Canaanites. Thus the gospel narratives are in perfect harmony with both geography and history.

CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.—Towards the close of his labors by the lake our Lord made his way northward, preaching the gospel till he came to “the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi.” This city is very fully described by Josephus and is spoken of by others, so that it has always been readily identified. Its site is indicated by Greek inscriptions in the face of the rock that are not yet obliterated and by the remains of a fortress which stood there at the time of our Saviour’s visit. Its original name was Paneas, and at present it is called Banias. Behind it rose the towering heights of Hermon, whither “he led his disciples up into a high mountain apart and was transfigured before them.” Descending thence he healed a lunatic boy, and soon after returned again to Capernaum, which was by the sea.

THE GREAT TEMPESTS.—In the course of his ministry Christ and his disciples had frequent occasion to cross the lake, and twice, we read,

they were overtaken by a sudden and perilous storm. To such tempests, in consequence of its physical situation and surroundings, it has ever been and still is subject. This lake is situated in a deep depression, its surface being 650 feet below that of the Mediterranean, and in consequence its climate a good part of the year is almost tropical. Directly northeast and at no great distance are the snow-capped heights of Hermon; and in certain atmospheric conditions the cold and heavy air of that region sinks and rushes down through the ravines to displace the heated and light air of the lake basin, and in this way are often created sudden and violent squalls upon its surface. Many modern travellers have actually witnessed its waters thrown into just such commotion as the evangelists describe. "Small as the Lake of Galilee is, and placid in general as a molten mirror," says Dr. Thomson, "I have repeatedly seen it quiver and leap and boil like a cauldron when driven by fierce winds from the eastern mountains, and the waves ran high—high enough to fill or 'cover' the ships, as St. Matthew has it. In the midst of such a gale calmly slept the Son of God, in the hinder part of the ship, until awakened by the terrified disciples."

We have now seen that wherever the gospel narratives place Jesus during his ministry in this

peculiar region, their representations to their minutest particulars are always in entire harmony with what is known and seen to have been the natural state of things there. His abode at Capernaum and his visits to the surrounding cities and villages, his teaching on the shores and in the synagogues, his miracles in the towns and in the desert, his intercourse with fishermen and tax-gatherers and centurions, the multitudes that thronged him in the streets and the storms that overtook him on the waters, his journeys and his voyages and retirements, are all not only in complete agreement with every physical feature of the region, but also stand so closely connected with and often so completely involved in the conditions of the localities as to offer visible and convincing evidence in support of the truth and correctness of the gospel history.

PERÆA.—The Saviour's work being accomplished in Galilee, he bade farewell to that busy theatre of life and set his face towards Jerusalem. Opposed and harassed there by his persistent and malicious enemies, the scribes and Pharisees, he left and retired to Peræa, or that part of the country lying east of the Jordan. There, as in Galilee, he labored to instruct the people and healed many of their sick. After the lapse of some four months, his time drawing nigh, he set out once more and

for the last time for Jerusalem. Some of the places and several of the incidents connected with this journey are mentioned, all of which are found to be in perfect accord with what remains to be seen at this day.

JERICHO.—Having crossed the Jordan at “the fords,” where it has been crossed ever since, we read that “he drew nigh unto Jericho.” This city, of which some faint ruins still remain, was then a place of wealth and grandeur, and in which was one of the princely residences of Herod the Great. It lay exactly on the Saviour’s road to Jerusalem. At this time, we are told, there lived in Jericho one “Zacchæus, who was the chief among the publicans;” and here, as Josephus informs us, was “a colony of publicans” established to secure the revenues accruing from the large traffic in balsam, which grew more luxuriantly in that hot district than in any other place, and to regulate the exports and imports between the Roman province and the dominions of Herod Antipas. Anxious to catch a view of Jesus, who was encompassed by a crowd, “Zacchæus ran before and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him.” The balsam and also the palm have utterly perished from this plain, but of the sycamore a remnant still remains. “We were gratified,” says Prof. Tristram, who was there in 1864, “by

the discovery that, though scarce, it is not quite extinct in the plain of Jericho, as we found two aged trees in the little ravine just to the south of these ruins in illustration of the gospel narrative."

THE ASCENT TO JERUSALEM.—Leaving Jericho, "He went before, ascending up to Jerusalem," and a rough and continuous "ascent" it was for some five or six hours. The site of Jericho is 650 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and the summit of the Mount of Olives over which he must pass is 2,725 feet above that level; hence the entire ascent in a distance of 14 or 15 miles was no less than 3,375 feet.

BETHANY.—Having passed through the deep and dismal gorge of Wady Kelt, along which the road led, and climbed at length to the height of its rocky ascent, "then came Jesus to Bethany." This village, according to the sacred narratives, was on the Mount of Olives, on the great thoroughfare from the Jordan valley to the capital, at the head of the ascent above Jericho, and at the distance of fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem. And precisely at this well-defined spot there has been a village through all the Christian centuries, and there is a little village there still, which has been visited and identified by scores of recent travelers. Its name, however, has been changed into



El Azariyeh, in commemoration of Lazarus, whom the Lord here called forth from his tomb.

MOUNT OF OLIVES.—This lies immediately east of Jerusalem, and there has never existed a doubt concerning its identity. At Bethany, on the eastern side of its summit, Jesus tarried on this occasion over one night, and in the morning, attended by a great multitude, he set out for the holy city. The distance was only two short miles, and his way lay over the heights of Olivet and round its southern shoulder. “When he was come to the descent of the Mount of Olives” the whole multitude, we are told, began to rejoice and shout, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord!” And it was at this precise point on the road that the first glimpse was caught of the southeastern corner of the city—just the sight which would naturally inspire the people to this joyous and triumphant exclamation.

“From this point,” says Dean Stanley, who carefully surveyed and studied the whole ground, “the road descends a slight declivity, and the glimpse of the city is again withdrawn behind the intervening ridge. A few moments and the path mounts; again it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instant the whole city bursts into view. The temple tower rises as from the earth, the temple courts

spread out, and the whole magnificent city, with its background of gardens and suburbs on the western plateau behind, lies before the view. It is hardly possible to doubt that this rise and turn of the road, this rocky ledge, was the exact spot where the multitude paused again, and 'He, when he beheld the city, wept over it.' Nowhere else on the Mount of Olives is there a view like this. And this is almost the only unmarked spot—undefiled or unhallowed by mosque or church, chapel or tower—left to speak for itself that here the Lord's feet stood and here his eyes beheld what is still the most impressive view which the neighborhood of Jerusalem furnishes—and the tears rushed forth at the sight."

KIDRON.—Again the procession advanced, and descending from this brow of Olivet, Christ, with the exultant multitude around him, in a few minutes reached "the brook Kidron," crossed it, and then passed up into Jerusalem through one of its eastern gates. The road still follows that shelving descent, and still that channel of Kidron, generally dry, must be crossed to reach and enter the city.

GETHSEMANE.—While at Jerusalem our Lord, we read, often left the noise and excitement of the city and sought rest and retirement in "the Garden of Gethsemane." He did so on the very

last evening of his life. "When Jesus had spoken these words he went forth over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into the which he entered and his disciples." There, in the midnight watch, he offered prayer "with strong crying and tears." There he sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." And there too it was that his perfidious disciple betrayed him into the hands of his enemies; "for Judas knew the place, as Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." Now the gospel narratives point to the Garden of Gethsemane as lying east of Jerusalem, a short distance from the city wall, on the other side of Kidron, and at the foot of the Mount of Olives. And just here we find a *spot*, now marked by eight aged olive-trees, which, from the middle of the fourth century at least, has been uniformly pointed out and looked upon as the very site of the "garden" in which the Saviour of the world endured his mortal agony. After the most careful study of the Gospels and examination of the place, this spot is found to fulfil all the conditions of these narratives. Tischendorf, the distinguished Biblical scholar of Germany, tells us that he finds this traditional locality "in perfect harmony with all that we learn from the evangelists." And Prof. Hackett says, "We may sit down there and read the narrative of

what the Saviour endured for our redemption, and feel assured that we are near the place where he prayed, 'saying, Father, not my will, but thine, be done.' "

We have now followed the footsteps of the Saviour from the beginning to the close of his eventful life; we have visited and contemplated the place of his nativity, the refuge of his infancy, the home of his childhood and youth, the place of his baptism and of his temptation, the scene of his ministry in Galilee, his visitations to surrounding cities, his retirement to the region beyond Jordan, the road he travelled and the localities through which he passed on his last return to Jerusalem to be offered up a sacrifice for the sin of the world; and in all these different and widely separated scenes we have found the most complete agreement, in every particular instance, between the statements and allusions of the Gospels and what may be seen and examined at the present day; and not only this, but also that the deeds and discourses ascribed to the Saviour are closely related to the very localities where they are said to have taken place, and could not have transpired anywhere else or among any other people or in any other age. And in all this we have clear and convincing evidence that in the four Gospels we have a correct narrative of the movements and

doings of a true and living man, who spoke and acted and travelled as related in them.

## II. COINCIDENCE AS TO VEGETATION.

The teachings of Jesus Christ as related in the Gospels abound in parables, figures, and similes drawn from the soil and scenery, the natural productions and living tenants, of the country in which he taught. And concerning these Dr. W. M. Thomson, who resided in Palestine for a quarter of a century, makes this general statement: "All the parables and illustrations and comparisons of Jesus are perfectly natural and appropriate to the country, the people, the age, and every other circumstance mentioned or implied in the evangelical narratives. We have the originals still before us. The teachings and illustrations of our Lord would have been out of place in any other country except this. They could not have been uttered anywhere else." An examination of particulars fully sustains this statement, as we shall now see.

LILIES OF THE FIELD.—Modern travellers have often noticed the beauty and abundance of spring flowers in Palestine. And it was at this season of the year that our Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount referred to the "lilies." Variegated tulips, purple and red gladioli, and scarlet

anemones (to which the common name *shusan*, "lilies," was applied) abounded on the plain of Gennesaret and covered the hillsides around the great Teacher and his listening throng. Hence we see how natural it was for him to point to these and say, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

WHEAT.—The first recorded parable of our Lord is that of the "sower," every word of which is in perfect agreement with what may be seen in the land to-day. "As I rode along the track under the hillside by which the plain of Gennesaret is approached," says Dean Stanley, "a slight recess in the hill, close upon the plain, disclosed at once in detail every feature of the great parable. There was the undulating corn-field descending to the water's edge. There was the 'trodden pathway' running through the midst of it, with no hedge or fence to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it or upon it, itself hard from the constant tramp of horse and mule and human feet. There was the 'good rich soil' which distinguishes the whole of that plain and its neighborhood from the bare hills elsewhere descending into the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn.

There was the 'rocky ground' of the hillside here and there protruding through the corn-fields as elsewhere through the grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of 'thorns' springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat. The illustration was complete."

Nor is the above to be regarded as a solitary coincidence; the same has often been observed in other parts. Travelling along the northern borders of Galilee, Dr. Thomson makes this observation: "Our path is leading us into the midst of a very lively agricultural scene. The parable about sowing has here its illustration even in its minutest details. 'Behold, a sower went forth to sow.' There is a nice and close adherence to actual life in this form of expression. The words imply that the sower, in the days of our Saviour, lived in a hamlet, and these people have actually come forth all the way from yonder village to the open country. Here there are no fences; the path passes through the cultivated land; the thorns grow in clumps all around; the rocks peep out in places through the scanty soil; and hard by are also patches extremely fertile. Now, here we have all the four kinds of earth within a dozen rods of us. Our horses are actually trampling down some seeds which have fallen by this wayside, and larks and sparrows are busy picking

them up. That man with his mattock is digging about the places where the rock is too near the surface for the plough, and much that is sown there will wither away because it has no deepness of earth. And not a few seeds have fallen among this *bellan*, and will be effectually choked by this most tangled of thorn-bushes. But a large portion, after all, falls into really good ground, and four months hence will exhibit every variety of crop up to the richest and heaviest that ever rejoices the heart even of an American farmer. Certainly nothing could be more to the point than this illustration. We doubtless are now looking upon the very facts which suggested to Him who taught in parables the instructive lesson of the sower."

TARES.—The parable of the tares among the wheat is equally true to nature. This sets forth three natural facts, all of which are verified by observation. 1. That the soil of Palestine produces *zizania*, or tares. For this we have the testimony of unnumbered travellers. Tares abound in that country and are a great nuisance to the farmers at the present day. 2. That they are injurious and therefore to be carefully weeded out. The taste is bitter, and when eaten separately or even diffused in ordinary bread they cause dizziness and often act as a violent emetic. It becomes



necessary, therefore, as implied in the parable, to separate them carefully from the wheat or barley where they are found. 3. That in the earlier stage of their growth they cannot easily be distinguished from the growing grain in the midst of which they are found; but in the latter stage the difference becomes apparent. "Let me call your attention to these tares," says Dr. Thomson, "which are growing among the barley. The grain is just in the proper stage of development to illustrate the parable. In those parts where the grain has headed out the tares have done the same, and there a child cannot mistake them for wheat or barley; but where both are less developed the closest scrutiny will often fail to detect them. 'When the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, *then* appeared the tares also.' Even the farmers, who in this country generally weed their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other in the early stage of their growth. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. For this reason it is said, 'Let both grow together until the time of harvest.' " Dean Stanley, Capt. Wilson, and other travellers relate that they saw women and children busily engaged in picking

out the tares from the wheat in the grain-fields of Samaria and other parts. So true both to nature and the practice of the people is this instructive parable.

MUSTARD PLANT.—Several references to this plant are made in the Gospels, and one express parable is based upon it, in which also are three natural facts introduced. 1. The size of the seed: “the least of all seeds.” It is a small seed, but not “the least of seeds;” the words are hyperbolic. “Small as a grain of mustard seed” was and still is a familiar and proverbial expression among Orientals, and our Lord in popular teaching adhered to popular language. 2. The size of the plant: “when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs and becometh a tree.” In comparison with other garden growths it is said to become a “tree;” at the same time it is expressly stated to be an “herb.” In Palestine it attains the form and size of a small tree. Travellers have met with it in several parts of the country as high as their heads on horseback. Prof. Hackett came across a little forest of these trees in the neighborhood of Mt. Carmel which measured from seven to nine feet in height. 3. It is said to be a favorite resort of birds: “so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” We are informed by numerous authorities that birds

are particularly fond of the seed and may often be seen settling in great numbers on the branches. Hence we see that the parable of the mustard-seed, while it adheres closely to nature, is at the same time an apt and forcible representation of the growth of the Christian religion from its small beginning.

THE VINE.—Frequent mention is made of the vine in the course of the gospel narratives. And Prof. Tristram, in his natural history, says, "Palestine is the true climate of the vine. The rocky hillsides, with their light gravelly soil and sunny exposures, the heat of summer, and the rapid drainage of the winter rains, all combine to render it peculiarly a land of vines. The hill country presents in combination all the features characteristic of the choicest wine districts of the Rhine, of France and Spain; and not only Judah, but all the land from Lebanon to Beersheba, was once clad on every hill with terraced vineyards, which have left behind them the traces of their existence in the wine-presses and vats hewn in the rocks."

The vineyard supplies the groundwork of another of our Lord's parables: "There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and hedged it round about and digged a wine-press in it and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen." One of the most striking features in the

scenery of Southern Palestine at the present time is the vineyard inclosure surrounded by loose stone walls with a gray, square tower in one corner. "These may be seen to-day," says Dean Stanley, "as of old, on the slopes of Hebron, of Bethlehem, and of Olivet."

FIG-TREE.—This is one of the native fruit-trees of Palestine and is found wild or cultivated in every part of it. It is mentioned in the Gospels in different connections. Under the shade of a fig-tree Nathanael sought seclusion, probably for prayer, and thought he was screened from all human observation, when the Saviour said to him, "When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee." And Tristram says, "There is no protection against the rays of an Eastern sun more complete than the dense foliage of the fig-tree."

Our Lord speaks of "a fig-tree planted in a vineyard" which proved fruitless, and reads from it one of his most interesting and instructive parables. And travellers tell us that nothing is more common in Palestine to this day than fig-trees and other fruit-trees planted among vines. "In some parts," says Tristram, "the fig-tree is cultivated as a sole crop, but more frequently it is mingled with other orchard fruits, especially with the vines, where the corners and irregular pieces of ground are generally occupied by a fig-tree."

On a certain occasion we read that the Saviour on his way from Bethany "saw a fig-tree in the way and came to it and found thereon nothing but leaves." And Dean Stanley, passing over the same route, says, "The fig-tree still remains here and there on the roadside." Figs appear before the leaves.

**PALM-TREES.**—In the early ages palm-trees were plentiful in many parts of Palestine. The Mount of Olives continued to be graced by them to the time of our Saviour, for on his last and triumphant entry into Jerusalem we read that "the people took branches of palms and went forth to meet him." On the mount itself they have now died out, but several fine ancient trees still wave close by among the buildings of the city.

**SYCAMORE.**—This tree is repeatedly mentioned in the Gospels. It is not to be confounded with our commonly called sycamore, or plane-tree, which resembles it only in the shape of its leaves. The sycamore of the New Testament is an ever-green and bears a species of figs. It is still found in the mild climate of the maritime plains of Phœnicia and Sharon, and also in the hot Jordan valley. "In form," says Tristram, "it resembles the English oak, with low spreading branches and dark foliage. It is very easy to climb, with its short trunk and its wide lateral branches fork-

ing out in all directions, and would naturally be selected by Zacchæus as the most accessible position from which to obtain a view of our Lord as he passed. There are still a few gnarled and aged sycamores among the ruins by the wayside of ancient Jericho and by the channel of the Wady Kelt."

Thus we see that all the statements made by the evangelists concerning the vegetable productions of the land in connection with our Lord's ministry are perfectly natural and in complete agreement with what the traveller finds there at the present day. Not a tree or a shrub or a flower or a blade stands in disharmony with their narratives. On the contrary, so far as these can bear witness at all, they attest their correctness and truth in every particular and on all occasions.

### III. COINCIDENCE AS TO LIVING CREATURES.

Many of the illustrations and parables employed by the Saviour in teaching the people were drawn from the character and habits of the animals inhabiting the country, animals with which they were all familiar. And the living descendants of those animals stand forth to-day as so many witnesses for the accuracy and fidelity of the four gospel histories.

FISHES.—From the earliest times the Sea of

Galilee was celebrated for its fisheries; and several of our Lord's disciples were fishermen, who pursued their vocation on that lake. The narratives of the evangelists represent this sea as abounding in fish of various kinds. Thus we read: "When they had let down the net they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake." On another occasion it is said, "They cast the net on the right side of the ship, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." This lake still abounds in a great variety of fishes. Prof. Tristram, who speaks from long and personal observation, says, "The density of the shoals of fish in the Sea of Galilee can scarcely be conceived by those who have not witnessed them. Frequently these shoals cover an acre or more of surface, and the fish, as they slowly move along in masses, are so crowded, with their back fins just appearing on the level of the water, that the appearance at a little distance is that of a violent shower of rain pattering on the surface."

Our Lord grounds a parable on the various "kinds" of fishes drawn up from these waters: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but

cast the bad away." A great variety of fishes, "clean and unclean," are still found in this lake, and the same operation of sorting may still be witnessed going on on its shore; and in proof we again quote Mr. Tristram: "We obtained fourteen species from this lake, and probably the number inhabiting it is three times as great. The greater number taken are rejected by the fishermen, and I have sat with them on the gunwale while they went through their net and threw out into the sea those that were too small for the market or were considered unclean. This custom brings out in great force the full bearing of the parable, which is scarcely illustrated by any incident in our English fisheries."

SCORPIONS.—These venomous creatures are spoken of by Christ as objects that were familiar to his disciples: "Will he for an egg offer him a scorpion?" "I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions." And, according to both Thomson and Tristram, they swarm in every part of Palestine, and the latter says that "in the warmer parts of the country every third stone is sure to conceal one."

SPARROWS.—Among the Jews these little birds were used as a common article of food, as they are still in the East; and our Saviour speaks of them as being so abundant and so easily taken that two



of them were sold "for a farthing." And in few countries of the world to-day are sparrows more numerous than in Palestine. "The trees and even the shrubs," says Dr. Thomson, "are stuffed full of their nests."

RAVENS.—Our Lord cites the raven as manifesting the providential care of God: "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls!" Of the ravens in Palestine Prof. Tristram says, "They are present everywhere to the eye and ear, and the odors that float around remind us of their use. Their food is scanty and precarious, as may be seen by their habit of flying restlessly about in constant search for it." And yet "God feedeth them."

EAGLES.—Eagles and vultures of various species have always been and still are numerous in Palestine, particularly the griffons. These are employed by our Lord to indicate the rapid gathering and descent of the Roman armies upon the corrupt body of the Jewish nation: "Whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." No figure could be more true to nature or more forcibly express the event than this. The distinguished naturalist just quoted, in his description of these raptorial birds, says, "The

number of griffons in every part of Palestine is amazing, and they are found at all seasons of the year. These birds detect their food by sight, not by scent. If an animal falls at night, it is not attacked till daylight, but if it fall or be slaughtered after sunrise, though the human eye may scan the firmament for one in vain, within five minutes a speck will appear overhead and, wheeling and circling in a rapid downward flight, a huge griffon will pounce on the carcass. In a few minutes a second and a third will dart down; another and another follow, till the air is darkened by the crowd, thus verifying the words, 'Where-soever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' "

DOVES.—The dove is notably a gentle and innocent bird. Our Lord refers to it as a type of what the Christian's character should be: "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." For the same reasons it is employed as an emblem of the Holy Spirit, "descending like a dove." At this day in Syria, as travellers inform us, the dove is the invariable companion of man wherever he has a settled habitation. "When travelling in the north of Syria," says Dr. Thomson, "I noticed in the villages tall, square buildings without roofs, whose walls were pierced inside by numberless pigeon-holes; in these nestled and bred

thousands of these birds. They are reared by the rich and the poor."

THE HEN.—This fowl, as we learn from rabbinical and other sources, was intimately connected with the Jewish household, and her natural habits, therefore, were familiar to all. One of the most remarkable of her actions is the peculiar note she utters to bid her chickens run and hide under her wings at the sight of a bird of prey. Hence we see how natural and how touching the figure which Jesus employs to express his tender anxiety to save Jerusalem from the swoop of the Roman eagle: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

To the hen the cock is nearly related, whose crowing is mentioned more than once in the Gospels: "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice." The times of crowing were regarded as correct indications of the hour of night. The regularity with which this fowl crows during the night in the East has been noticed by many travellers. Arundell says, "I have often heard the cocks of Smyrna crowing in full chorus, with scarcely the variation of a minute." And Tristram: "We were particularly struck by this in Beirût, where, during the first week of

our stay, we were regularly awakened three times every night by the sudden crowing of the cocks on the roof of the hotel."

SHEEP.—The principal characteristics of Palestine sheep are set forth in the following passage: "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep; the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." All this is natural and true to the letter, as may be seen in that country to-day. "The Eastern shepherd," says Tristram, "never drives, but always leads his sheep." Hartley, in his "Researches," relates this incident: "Passing by a flock of sheep, I asked the shepherd if it was usual to give names to sheep. He replied that it was. I then bade him call one of his sheep. He did so, and it instantly left its pasturage and companions and ran up to his hand with signs of pleasure." And Dr. Thomson, in his "Land and Book," has this passage: "It is necessary the sheep should be taught to follow and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get

into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly."

GOATS.—In his discourse portraying the final judgment our Lord represents goats and sheep as forming one mixed flock: "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Goats are still plentiful in Palestine, and concerning them Tristram has this passage: "The hilly district running up through the centre of Western Palestine is well adapted for goats, and in this country the sheep and goats are always seen together under the same shepherd and in company."

WOLVES.—The name of these animals occurs in several of the Saviour's discourses, but always with reference to their fierce and treacherous character. "Wolves in sheep's clothing." "I send you forth as lambs among wolves." "An hireling, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep." Wolves

still inhabit Palestine and still exhibit the same character. Prof. Tristram, in his explorations of the country, repeatedly met with them and relates two encounters with them. "In the hill country of Benjamin, about Bethel and Gibeah," he says, "the wolves still raven. We found them alike in the forests of Bashan and Gilead, in the ravines of Galilee and Lebanon, and in the maritime plains. Their boldness is very remarkable. The wolf is now, as of old, the dread of the shepherds of Palestine."

THE ASS.—The most notable mention of this animal in the gospel narratives is that in connection with our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem: "And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon." This patient creature is to be seen everywhere in Palestine, performing the same service at the present day. "In the East," says Prof. J. G. Wood, "the ass is the universal saddle-animal. It is fed and groomed like the horse, and is ridden by persons of the highest rank."

Thus we see that all the animals named or referred to in the Gospels still inhabit the land, and not only that, but also exhibit the same traits of character and habits as are there ascribed to them. As with the topography and vegetation of the country, so with its living tenants, there is the

most complete correspondence between what is presented on the gospel page and what is seen on the face of nature at the present time. There to-day we behold unmistakably the originals of the Saviour's parables and illustrations. Fish and fowl and beast stand forth before us as so many living witnesses, so far as they are concerned, for the correctness and truth of what the evangelists relate. The testimony could not be more indisputable, the harmony could not be more complete, and the lessons could not be more natural or appropriate.

#### IV. COINCIDENCE AS TO CLIMATE.

The climate of Palestine in different districts varies according to their altitude. The references made to it in the Gospels are few and general, but as far as they go they are found to agree perfectly with modern observations as registered for years at Jerusalem and other points.

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.—These meteorological phenomena are once and again mentioned in the sacred narratives, but in a very general way, yet with sufficient definiteness to indicate that they were well-known occurrences: "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west." "The people that stood by and heard it said that it thundered." In Palestine thunder,

while rarely heard in summer, is not uncommon in winter. Robinson, Porter, Tristram, and others record that they witnessed severe thunder-storms in different parts of the country.

WIND AND RAIN.—A storm of this kind is a frequent occurrence during the winter half of the year. Our Lord's quick and discerning mind saw in the traces left behind by one of these the following striking and impressive illustration, with which he closes his Sermon on the Mount: "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it." Dr. H. J. Van Lennep, who spent nearly a lifetime in Western Asia, says, "The rains here, though comparatively infrequent, are copious and heavy while they last. The uneven surface of the country, presenting steep hillsides furrowed by deep valleys, occasions during a storm the rapid gathering of waters to a single channel, so that mighty torrents suddenly appear rushing along through gorges where not a drop of water trickled an hour before. These pour down with irresistible force, often tearing away the ground and sweeping trees and all else before them. Houses erected near their track are



in imminent danger of being undermined and carried away by these angry floods." Rae Wilson gives a similar account of these heavy and sudden rain-storms in Palestine.

CLOUDS AND HEAT.—Our Lord refers to these in the following words: "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, 'There cometh a shower, and so it is.'" In Palestine the westerly winds, or those passing over the great Mediterranean, bring most of the rains that fall there. "In the forty-three days," says Tristram, "during which rain fell in 1863-4, the wind was invariably west or southwest." "And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, 'There will be heat, and it cometh to pass.'" The south wind, or that sweeping over the arid sands and deserts of Arabia, always brings the oppressive heat of the sirocco, so stifling to man and beast. "The south wind," says the authority just quoted, "is always oppressive, at whatever time of the year it blows. We had two days' sirocco with the south wind in November; again on January 14 and 15, March 1 and 2, April 21 and 25, May 15, 16, 26, and 27. These were the only occasions on which there was south wind, and on each occasion the sirocco was most oppressive." "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern

this time?" This reference to rain and heat could be true in no other country than Judæa and the adjacent region; this reproof could be applicable to no other people than the Jews; and it could have been administered by no other than one acquainted with both. Taken as related by the evangelist, all is consistent and all is true and perfectly natural.

#### V. CONCLUSION.

Here we close our survey of the land, the scene of the Saviour's life and ministry. We have followed his footsteps through its length and breadth and have examined and compared its features and conditions as to its geography, localities, vegetation, living tenants, and climatic changes with the statements of the sacred narratives and have found them in all these respects to be in entire harmony. Not a hill lifts its head, not a site exhibits a ruin, not a stream ripples in its channel, at the faintest disharmony with the history they relate; not a tree or a vine or a flower or a weed springs out of its soil in contradiction to their statements; not a living creature cleaves its waters or roams over its fields or flies through its firmament at variance with their descriptions; nor do even the flitting clouds or the shifting winds exhibit any disagreement with their

representations. There is absolutely no discrepancy.

Wherever the gospel history places the Saviour, whether on the water or on the land, in the city or in the desert place, the representations, to their minutest details, are always in accordance with what is known to be the natural state of things there. All his recorded movements and journeys, as we have seen, are in perfect agreement with the geographical features and local sites of the country. All his labors and wonderful works are in harmony with the scene where they are said to have been enacted. All his illustrations and parables are drawn from objects and operations that may be still seen in the land. Many of his discourses are so involved in the conditions and so intertwined with the features and surroundings of the places where they are said to have been delivered that they could not have been spoken anywhere else. His comparisons and figures and similes are as indigenous to the country as are its vines and lilies and fig-trees. His very thoughts and expressions take their cast and coloring from the scenes where the evangelists place him, scenes that remain to this day beneath the bright and broad sunlight. In a word, as the engraved seal fits into its own impression in the wax, so fits the gospel history into the form and

features and conditions of the land in which its divine subject lived and labored and died for the salvation of men.

Prof. H. B. Tristram closes his journal of travels throughout Palestine, undertaken in company with a corps of scientific men, with special reference to the Geology, Physical Geography, Botany and Zoology of the country, with the following unqualified and decisive testimony: "The primary object of our journey was the investigation of physical and natural history; not, however, to the exclusion of other objects of interest. We passed through the land with our Bibles in our hands—with, I trust, an unbiased determination to investigate *facts* and their independent bearing on sacred history. While on matters of science the inspired writers speak in the ordinary language of their times (the only language which could have been understood), I can bear testimony to the minute truth of innumerable incidental allusions in Holy Writ to the facts of nature, of climate, of geographical position—corroborations of Scripture which, though trifling in themselves, reach to minute details that prove the writers to have lived when and where they are asserted to have lived, which attest their scrupulous accuracy in recording what they saw and observed around them, and which, therefore, must increase our

confidence in their veracity where we cannot have the like means of testing it. I can find no discrepancies between their geographical or physical statements and the evidence of present facts. I can find no standpoint here for the keenest advocate against the full inspiration of the scriptural record. 'The Holy Land not only elucidates but bears witness to the truth of the Holy Book.'

The whole surface of the Judæa, Samaria, Galilee, and Peræa of to-day is inscribed with a record that is indisputable. Even skeptics, after the most thorough examination of the ground for themselves, while they will not receive Christ with the heart or yield their minds to the dominion of the spiritual doctrines which he taught, find themselves constrained to admit that the gospel narratives are unquestionable records of actual events—of the travels and deeds and sufferings of the great Teacher of Nazareth. No opposer of the divine claims and miraculous works of Christ, now living, has more closely scrutinized or severely tested every statement, fact, and circumstance embraced in the gospel histories than Renan, the French skeptic. To prepare himself for writing a "Life of Jesus" he studied everything ancient and modern relating to the subject or having a bearing upon it. He even went to Palestine and spent years there to examine every-

thing visible for himself. He left no spot unvisited, no stone unturned. And of all this what was the result? At what conclusion did he arrive? It was this, and we give it in his own words: "I have traversed in every direction the district where the scenes of the gospel are laid. I have visited Jerusalem and Hebron and Samaria. Almost no site named in the story of Jesus has escaped me. All this narrative, which at a distance seems to float in the clouds of an unreal world, thus assumed a body, a substantial existence, which astonished me. The striking coincidence of texts and places, the wonderful harmony of the ideal of the Gospels with the country which served as its frame, was for me a revelation. I had before my eyes a *Fifth Gospel*, and thenceforth through the stories of Matthew and Mark, instead of an abstract being who one might say had never existed, I saw in life and movement a human form that challenged admiration!"

No intelligent man, at the present day, can reasonably doubt that Jesus of Nazareth was a real character, a true and living man, who labored and taught in the age and country represented in the Gospels. To quote again a thoroughly competent authority, John Stuart Mill, whom no one will accuse or suspect of being biased in favor of Christianity: "Whatever else may be taken away from

us by rational criticism, Christ is still left—a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. Who among his disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; and certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort. About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight which must place him, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this preëminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, we have the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue, from the abstract to the concrete, than to endeavor to so live that Christ would approve our life.”

## PART II.

## NATURAL LAWS AND THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

THE New Testament Scriptures present Jesus of Nazareth as a divine Person, and assert that he was a Teacher sent forth from God, and that in attestation of his divine commission he wrought many notable MIRACLES; and the object of this chapter is to present, in a clear and concise form, various evidences, natural and historical, which render these miracles credible.

A miracle may be defined as, An act of God which manifestly deviates from the ordinary working of his power according to what are called the "laws of nature." Of this character were the miracles ascribed in the gospel to Jesus Christ.

## MIRACLES AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CHRISTIANITY.

Miracles are an integral and vital element of the Christian religion. Indeed, the whole gospel scheme is one grand chain of miracles. The birth of Christ was a miracle, his sinless life was a miracle, his teaching was interwoven with miracles, his death was attended with miracles, his resurrection was a miracle, and his ascension to heaven



was a miracle. Miracles, therefore, are inseparable from Christianity. Both must stand or fall together. Christianity, in its origin and in its provisions, claims to be a supernatural religion; and it cannot be severed from miracles without losing both its virtue and its authority. Take away miracles from the gospel, and you take away its foundation stones and reduce the whole spiritual structure resting upon them to a shattered ruin, to a meaningless heap.

Jesus Christ rests his claims to be received as a teacher sent from God upon the miraculous works which he performed. To these he perpetually appeals as his divine credentials as an ambassador from the Father. Thus he speaks: "The works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works." "If I had not done among them works which none other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin."

Upon the evidence of his miracles, to which he thus appealed, many, we read, believed on him. "Rabbi," said Nicodemus, "we know that

thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." Others, we are told, blinded by preconceived and erroneous notions concerning the promised Messiah, and by hatred of the pure doctrines he taught, rejected him. "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. And if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

To reject the miracles of Christ, then, is to reject his teaching and to reject Him. A disbeliever in the supernatural works of Christ cannot be a disciple of his, cannot, in any proper sense of the word, be a Christian. The credibility of the Saviour's miracles, therefore, is a subject of momentous and vital interest to every man, and demands his serious and candid consideration.

#### MIRACLES NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

The miracles related in the gospel narratives have in every age engaged much study and discussion, but in none more than in our own. They involve much that is inexplicable, much that is mysterious to man, and thus offend the wisdom of the proud of intellect and not unfrequently perplex even the humble and honest seeker after truth. Hence some are led boldly to deny their verity, while others remain in painful doubts concerning them.

Now, no man can consistently deny the *possibility* of miracles but the absolute atheist; to him there exists no being or power capable of producing such results; he, and he alone, therefore, can deny their possibility without self-contradiction. And as there is no ground for argument with such a person, I part company with him at once, and proceed to address those of a more rational and hopeful creed.

If we believe that there is a God, infinite in wisdom and power, we must believe, at least, that such miracles as those recorded in the gospel are *possible* to him; for nothing can be beyond the power of him who is omnipotent or beyond the skill of him who is omniscient. If we admit that God is the first and efficient cause of the whole system of nature, we cannot doubt that he could have, in the beginning, set all its forces—light, heat, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, and gravitation—to work according to other laws, laws so different from those which prevail as to produce by their mutual and combined operations another sort of world, a world which would have possessed not a single feature in common with that we now behold. No intelligent theist will question this. And does not the greater power, which is thus adequate to determine and constitute laws, include the lesser power that may be

necessary to modify or suspend them so as to produce what we call a miracle? "Belief in miracle," says John Stuart Mill, "is perfectly rational on the part of a believer in God." But while all this is freely admitted, some there are who see, or think they see, sufficient reasons to doubt, if not to deny, the actual occurrence of miracles at any time or place in our world. Let us glance, then, at the difficulties which are supposed to forbid faith in the wonderful works ascribed to Christ.

#### OBJECTIONS TO MIRACLES.

Of the objections and arguments urged against miracles, the following are the most worthy of consideration.

I. "Miracles are contrary to all observation and experience."

Human observation and experience are limited by both space and time. What may be unknown to the people of one age, or of one country, may be quite familiar to those of another age or of another country. Hence the fact that we of the present day have neither seen nor experienced a miracle supplies no proof that those who, 1,850 years ago, assembled on the shores of the Sea of Galilee were not both witnesses and subjects of many miracles.

2. "Miracles are incomprehensible, and therefore cannot be reasonably believed."

Miracles are indeed incomprehensible as to the *mode* in which they are accomplished, but not as to the result produced. And this is equally true of a multitude of the most familiar operations of nature, which all men unhesitatingly believe. We thrust a twig into the ground and presently it sends forth roots, grows into a vine, and bears grapes; but how the moisture of the soil in passing through the alembics of the vine is converted into the luscious juice of those grapes is as much beyond our comprehension as how the water in passing through the water-pots at Cana of Galilee was changed into wine. The multiplication of the seed cast into the furrow is as great a mystery to us as the multiplication of the bread in the Saviour's hands to feed the multitude. The origination of life in the unborn infant is as much beyond our comprehension as was its restoration to the little daughter of Jairus after it had been breathed out. To form and quicken a human being is at least as great a marvel and a mystery as to raise him from the dead.

3. "Miracles are infractions of the laws of nature, and God cannot violate the laws which he himself has established."

Miracles are nowhere represented in Scripture

as violations, or even contradictions, of the established laws of nature; they are not against or contrary to nature, but they are above and beyond nature. In a miracle we have a superior force overcoming an inferior, an occurrence which perpetually takes place in every province of creation. "Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher, mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral; yet we say not, when the lower thus gives place in favor of the higher, that there was any violation of law or that anything contrary to nature came to pass." The principle of the counteraction of force by force meets us everywhere in nature. By it the earth and all the other planets are retained in their orbits, the centrifugal force being balanced by the centripetal. By it the growth of every vegetable is carried on and the actions of every animal are performed. Oxygen, which composes one-half of the whole substance of the globe, is one of the most powerful and violent elements in nature; but a small proportion of hydrogen combining with it overcomes all its energy and renders it bland and harmless as the water we drink, for water is formed by this precise combination: or let a certain proportion of nitrogen embrace it and it becomes mild as the air we breathe, for the atmosphere is just such a

combination of these two ingredients. Again, gravitation is a force that strongly pulls all material substances on the face of the earth downwards towards its centre; but the vital force of plants overcomes it, and in spite of all its pull, carries streams of liquid solutions upward and with them builds a tree fifty or a hundred feet high. Again, by gravitation my body, with all its members, like everything else, is perpetually drawn downward; but I can lift my arm and so far overcome it, but when I do so the law of gravitation, as far as that arm is concerned, is not annihilated or even suspended; it exerts its power as much as ever upon it, but is overcome by the higher law or force of my will. In the act of lifting up my arm, therefore, there is no violation of law. So when the will-force of Jesus so far overcame that of gravitation as to enable him to walk on the waves of the sea there was no violation, no interruption of law; gravitation all the while might have exerted its full force on every particle of his body as on the uplifted arm, but was overcome by the superior force of his divine will. So that in this astonishing miracle we do but witness a weaker force overcome by a stronger or a lower law yielding to a higher, a fact in entire harmony with the established government of the whole physical world.

4. "The stability and uniformity of nature are against the admission of miracles."

The realm of nature is indeed a realm of established order, and no book asserts the uniformity of nature's laws more emphatically than the Bible. But this, instead of being an argument for the exclusion of miracles, is a necessary condition for their display. If there had not been an established order of nature, such a thing as a distinct and decisive miracle could not have taken place, or at least could not have been distinguished from its occasional aberrations or obliquities. It is the regularity of nature that proves an exceptional event to have been a miracle. The prevailing uniformity of natural laws, however, is no proof that their action never has been and never can be modified or suspended by a miracle. So far as the observations of living men have extended, they may pronounce positively that no instance, no sign of departure from law, has been witnessed by them; but this is quite another thing from proof that there never has been such a departure. Astronomers had long been telling the world that among the heavenly bodies they observed nothing but regular orbits and uniform motions, and that any departure from this established order was forbidden by law; yet, to the astonishment of all, in 1846 there happened such a thing as a comet



splitting into two, each having a distinct tail and nucleus, and, after travelling far apart through millions of miles, reuniting and forming one comet again as at first. Of this extraordinary occurrence the heavens gave no indication before and retained no trace after; the phenomenon is known to us only from the testimony of those who observed it. And so it has been with the miracles of the gospel; nature gave no sign of their coming and has preserved no evidence of their accomplishment; we know that they were wrought only through the concurrent testimony of those who, like the observers of the comet, were eye-witnesses of their performance.

5. "Miracles are contrary to the universal law of cause and effect, and are therefore incredible."

The miracles of the gospel were not effects without a cause, but were effects produced immediately by the most efficient of all causes. To this objection one of the masters of modern reasoning has returned this sufficient reply: "A miracle is no contradiction to the law of cause and effect; it is a new effect supposed to be produced by the introduction of a new cause. Of the adequacy of that cause, if present, there can be no doubt, and the only antecedent improbability which can be ascribed to the miracle is the improbability that any such cause existed." Grant

the "cause," that is, God, and all improbability vanishes.

6. "The universe is a complete and all-related machine, and to interfere by a miracle with one of its laws or forces would be to propagate disturbance through the whole; a miracle, therefore, is incredible."

To this we might be content simply to reply that the world is not a machine and God is not a mechanic in any such sense as is generally attached to these terms. But accepting the simile for what it is worth, I deny that any such disturbance would necessarily be spread through nature by any of the Saviour's miracles. We often see the materials and forces of nature, even by the will of man, diverted or opposed in various ways; we see him set inert and heavy bodies in sudden and rapid motion, blow masses of rock into fragments with his dynamite, cut down forests and thereby diminish the amount of rain and increase that of the solar heat, drain pestilential swamps and convert them to healthful habitations, divert the lightning in its fearful rush and send it harmless into the ground; but the general workings of nature are in no way detrimentally affected by any or all of these. Why, then, should the miracles of Jesus—his healing a leper, giving sight to the blind, withering a fig-tree, or stilling

a tempest on the little Lake of Galilee—be supposed to send such disturbance through the constitution of nature? And even if in the natural course of things such an effect would follow, it is sufficient to observe that, since all the forces of nature, as scientists now hold, are but different manifestations of one and the same force, and that one force but the will-force of God, the will-force of him who performs the miracle, it is manifest that he could with infinite ease limit and confine the effects of the most stupendous miracle on record to the object or individual concerned in its performance.

Such are the principal objections that have been urged from the operations of natural law against the gospel miracles. And all these, as we have now seen, are without force; they present no antecedent grounds, point out no fundamental principle, offer no conclusive or convincing reason for rejecting these miracles. They are but as blank cartridges, making a noise indeed, but leaving the object against which they are aimed unmoved and unharmed.

#### EVIDENCE FOR MIRACLES IN NATURE.

The researches of natural science, though they have succeeded in interpreting so many of the laws and phenomena of the creation, can say

nothing *directly* either for or against the particular miracles related in the New Testament. The field of science is confined to physical nature, but these miracles belong to quite another field—a field where her instruments cannot avail, where her experiments cannot be made, and where all her calculations are powerless; their producing Cause is above and beyond her means of investigation.

But though science cannot be cited as a direct witness for the miracles of Christ, yet it has rendered one important service relative to this subject: it points out certain events in the history of our planet which no physical laws or forces will serve to explain or account for and which, therefore, must be ascribed to a Power above nature. The history of this globe, as deciphered by science, presents indisputable evidence that God, at successive periods, wrought miracles in our world. Some of these we now proceed to notice.

I. We have a miracle in the origination of MATTER. If we believe there is a God at all, we must believe that he is eternal and before all things. And if he was before all things, then all things must have had a beginning. Matter, the dead and inorganic matter, composing our globe and all other globes, therefore, is not eternal; and it is not self-originated, it could not of its own

accord begin to be, for that is inconceivable, is, indeed, impossible, for that would be acting before it had a being. Matter, then, must have been *created*. And evidence of this it still carries in its own bosom. Every elementary molecule of matter, science tells us, has its specific properties, so that, as Sir John Herschel asserts, "these molecules possess all the characteristics of *manufactured articles*." And Prof. Maxwell says, "No theory of evolution can be formed to account for the similarity of the molecules throughout all time and space. These molecules are and ever have been perfect in number and measure and weight. None of the processes of nature, since the time when nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. On the other hand, the exact equality of each molecule to all others of the same kind precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent." Matter, then, had a beginning and must have been created, that is, must have been the product of a miracle.

2. We have a miracle in the origin of MOTION. In whatever form or condition matter was created or originally existed, in that form and condition it must have always remained unless disturbed or put in motion by some external agency. Science lays it down as a fundamental principle that

“matter is *inert*,” and its first law of motion asserts that “a body of matter at rest continues in that state except in so far as it may be compelled by impressed force to change that state.” Hence whatever may have been the primordial condition of the material universe, whether a cloud of dust, according to Democritus, or a fiery mist, according to the modern hypothesis, if not subjected to the action of an Efficient Cause exterior to itself, it must have remained for ever dead, motionless, and unchangeable. To originate motion, to start the revolutions of the earth and the other planets, therefore, some external agency possessed of spontaneity must be inferred. And as the only spontaneous agent we know of is *free-will*, the Will of the eternal Being (for that alone was adequate) must have been the first cause of motion, of interaction in masses, and of progression in space. Motion, therefore—all motion in the system of nature—originated in the fiat of the Almighty, that is, in a miracle.

3. We have a miracle in the institution and coördination of the PHYSICAL LAWS which actuate and govern material nature. The laws of gravitation and motion, the laws of light and heat, of electricity and magnetism, of attraction and repulsion, all these, always and everywhere, work with mathematical and infallible exactness, and

all are so admirably adjusted and combined that they play into each other's hands as if each were an angel of unerring sympathy and insight, and thus out of infinite complexity of operations produce a world of divine unity, harmony, and beauty. Such a system of perfect and all-related laws, embracing and controlling all that takes place in the earth, the ocean, and the atmosphere, could have its origin in none other than the All-comprehending Mind. Law implies a law-giver and a time when it was given. The institution and coördination of the marvellous laws which govern our world, therefore, must have had a beginning and must have been an immediate act of God, in other words, a miracle. No sane mind will undertake to dispute this.

4. Descending through undefined periods, we have again a miracle in the introduction of PLANT-LIFE upon the earth. That our globe was once in a condition that allowed not of the existence of vegetation and that it continued through long ages without a single plantal growth upon its whole surface, being a molten sphere, is a fact admitted by all. With the first plant appeared in our world a new thing, a new force, differing essentially from all the physical and chemical forces that had previously been in operation, and governed by essentially different laws. Nay,

plant-life was so far superior to those forces that it employed them as its servants to accomplish its own ends. It possessed a power to overcome gravitation and to exercise a chemistry peculiar to itself. It seized upon and grouped the atoms of inorganic matter to compose for itself an organized residence, such as had never existed before. Whence, then, came this distinct principle, this new and mysterious power, this vital force of plants? Not from any combination of the previously existing forces, for it had nothing in common with them. Not from any quality or composition of soil, for to this day the most accomplished chemists have utterly failed to produce a composition from which it can be elicited or even a form in which it can be induced to take up its abode; it rejects every habitation except that of its own construction. Prof. Huxley vainly attempts to account for this vital mystery by telling us that every plant comes from protoplasm. Be it so, but the protoplasm that will give birth to plant-life must itself be the product of some previous plant, and such a thing is unknown and non-existent except as produced under the influence of pre-existing life. This stands now an undisputed fact. Whence, then, we ask again, the *first plant* that produced the first living protoplasm? But one answer can be returned—it



must have been the product of supernatural Agency, or a miracle. "For these reasons," says the profound author of "Habit and Intelligence," "I believe that plant-life, like matter and energy, had its origin in no secondary cause, but in the direct action of Creative Power."

5. Coming down to a later period still in the history of our globe, we witness another miracle in the introduction of ANIMAL LIFE. In this event we have a marked upward step in the progressive work of creation. Whatever general or particular resemblance may appear between some members of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, there exists an essential distinction between them; the one cannot be derived from the other. Plants feed on inorganic matter; animals can feed only on organic matter—on vegetables or vegetable productions. "Vegetables," says Prof. Murphy, "form their organic compounds out of the materials of the inorganic world, and animals give them back to the inorganic world again in the form of waste material. Thus the relations of vegetables and of animals to matter are *opposite*. The dynamic function of vegetables also is the *opposite* of that of animals. Vegetables take up, animals give out, energy. In a word, vegetables take up both matter and energy from the inorganic world, and the animals that feed on the

vegetables give back the matter and the energy again to the inorganic world." The animal differs from the plant not only in its chemic and dynamic actions, but also in its physiological functions and capacities; it possesses powers of sense and activity with which we can find nothing to compare in the whole vegetable kingdom. In animal life or vital power, then, we have a new force and what may be characterized, in reference to all that went before it, as a *supernatural* product. In it we have a product above and beyond all that nature had previously exhibited or owned, and which, as the cause must ever excel its effect, must have been brought into existence by a Power above and beyond all that nature possessed.

It was long a favorite notion with a certain class of naturalists that life could be generated spontaneously from inorganic matter, and it was announced more than once that the feat had actually been accomplished. But late and more accurate experiments have disproved all this and settled the question. "Spontaneous generation" has now been given up by its most ardent advocates. Even Tyndall has been compelled to say, "I affirm that no shred of trustworthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life." And Huxley has made the frank ac-

knowledge that the doctrine of "*life only from life*" is victorious along the whole line at the present day." From whence, then, the first life but from the living God? The origin of animal life upon our planet cannot rationally be ascribed to any other cause than a special and direct act of the Creator. "Geology," says Prof. Dana, "appears to bring us directly before the Creator, and leads us to no other solution of the origin of life than this—*Deus fecit*" (God produced it). So Prof. Murphy: "We have every reason to believe that animal life, like matter, has had its origin in the direct action of Creative Power." So Principal Dawson: "Whatever theory we adopt, undoubtedly we must hold that a higher spiritual Power or Creator is necessary to the existence of life." And even Darwin himself ascribes the beginning of life on our globe to a specific act of the Creator. These are his words: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally *breathed by the Creator* into a few forms or into one." In the introduction of animal life upon the earth, then, we have an undeniable, an admitted, miracle.

6. Descending still with the flow of time and passing by the various "orders" of animals that were successively introduced to inhabit sea and land and air, we now come down to the close of

the geological history of our globe; and here we behold another signal miracle in the creation of MAN. In intelligent and moral man we have a being quite distinct from and immeasurably in advance of all the living creatures that had previously occupied the earth—a being whose introduction into existence cannot be rationally ascribed to any agency but a special act of the Creator. No forces or laws of the physical world and no properties or functions or powers of animal nature that had preceded him will serve to account for his unique and preëminent nature and character. In body and mind he is acknowledged, by common consent, to be unapproached by any living thing that went before. His erect and symmetrical form, his expressive countenance and commanding attitude, his sensitive and ingenious hands, his voluminous brain and delicate nerves, his self-consciousness and intellectual faculties, his memory and imagination and reasoning powers, his capacity for language and social intercourse, his affections and emotions and conscience, his susceptibility for moral culture and refinement, his genius for science, poetry, and music, his ability to survey the scenes of nature and to understand its laws, his conscious freedom of will and accountability, his sense of right and guilt and penitence, his innate promptings to look up

and appeal to a higher Power, his boundless aspirations and intuitions of immortality, his ability to look backward into the abyss of the past and forward into the eternity which is future—these preëminent endowments prove him at once to every unbiased mind to be a separate “order” of being, the product of a direct and special act of the Creator.

I am well aware that a widely different view has been put forth and is held by some. Every reader knows that Lamarck conceived the idea, and that later Darwin and his followers have attempted to prove, that all living creatures, man included, have come into being by what is called “Natural Selection;” in other words, by slow and fortuitous variations beginning with the lowest and simplest vitalized atoms and carried on nobody knows through what myriads of ages. But this theory, or rather hypothesis, at least so far as *man* is concerned, is beset by difficulties so numerous and so great that they have perplexed and staggered its stoutest advocates and compelled them to make admissions that plainly show upon what a flimsy foundation their assumptions rest.

Prof. Huxley, though among the foremost of these evolutionists, finds himself forced to speak thus: “No one is more certain than I am that, whether man is from the brutes or not, he is as-

surely not *of* them." Again he says, "The divergence of man from the simian, or monkey, race is UNMEASURABLE and practically INFINITE."

Prof. Alfred Wallace, one of the originators of and by far the best expositor of the theory of Natural Selection, confesses that he discovers in man, in his body as well as in his mind, what compels him to believe that a special interposition of divine agency was concerned in his production. He finds in "the peculiar construction of his hand and foot," in the "wonderful power, range, flexibility, and sweetness of the musical sounds producible by the human larynx," in the "size of his brain," in his "capacity to form ideal conceptions of space and time, of eternity and infinity," in his "capacity for intense artistic feelings of pleasure in form, color, and composition," in those "abstract ideas of form and number which render geometry possible," and in his "conscience or moral sense"—in these he finds what convinces him that man is to be set "apart" in the zoological system, "not only as the head of organic nature, but in some degree *a new and distinct order of being.*"

St. George Mivart, also an evolutionist, and who stands in the first rank of living naturalists, makes this explicit statement: "The soul of man

was created, not by any præexisting means, but by the *direct action* of the Almighty, symbolized by the term *breathing*."

Dr. Dawson, President of Montreal University, speaking of the first man, says, "His Maker *breathed into him* a spiritual nature akin to His own, whereby he became different from all other animals and the very shadow and likeness of God, capable of rising to abstractions and general conceptions of truth and goodness and of holding communion with his Creator."

Arnold Guyot, Professor of Geology in the College of New Jersey, makes this emphatic statement: "That spiritual element which constitutes man a distinct creation can no more be derived from the physiological functions of the animal than life can be evolved from dead matter. There is between the two planes an impassable abyss."

Prof. Dana, of Yale College, America's most distinguished geologist, gives his view of this subject in these words: "If, then, the present teaching of geology as to the origin of species is for the most part indecisive, it still strongly confirms the belief that man is not of nature's making. Independently of such evidence, man's high reason, his unsatisfied aspirations, his free will, all afford the fullest assurance that he owes his existence to

the *special act* of the Infinite Being whose image he bears."

If, therefore, any weight of authority or any kind or number of decisive facts can prove anything, then that *man* is the product of a special and direct act of God, or a *miracle*, is abundantly established.

We have now seen that, at successive stages in the progressive work of forming, furnishing, and peopling the earth, special and direct acts of divine power were put forth. The origination of matter, the beginning of motion, the ordination of physical laws, the origin of plant-life, the introduction of animal life, and the creation of man—are all indisputable *miracles*; nothing else that human science can point to or human philosophy suggest will serve either to explain or account for them.

Now these facts prove to us several important truths: they prove that miracles are not impossible, that God has not tied and bound his own hands by the ordinances which he has appointed for the general government of the world, that the "laws of nature" are subject to the will of the supreme *Lawgiver*, and that he has in the course of the world's history once and again interposed among the workings of natural forces to accomplish what they could not effect. And further, as



his plan concerning the world is continuous, without a break, and still in steady progress of development, they prove that what had taken place in the past might take place again in the future; in other words, they establish the *probability* that, should occasion demanding and worthy of them arise in time to come, miracles would be performed again. And such an occasion, as we shall immediately see, did arise.

It will be observed that each of the foregoing miracles marked the beginning of a distinct and important epoch in the world's progress and served to advance and lift it to a higher plane—the chaotic to orderly material, the material to the vegetable, the vegetable to the animal, and the animal to intelligent and moral man. And now, as the facts of man's history abundantly prove, *another advance and lift* became necessary; and analogy would naturally lead to the expectation that this, as in each of the preceding stages, would be accomplished by a like interposition of miraculous power. And so, as we are assured by credible witnesses, it came to pass.

Man, the human race, the beings for whom the world was made, early fell from the bright and happy state in which their Maker had placed them and sank into a condition of sin and misery, subject to toil and disease and death. Infinite

Wisdom had foreseen this and provided for it. His plan, perfect and all-comprehending, embraced a system of means for their restoration and elevation; and the unfolding of that plan would bring on a brighter day for lost humanity. Accordingly, when in the fulness of time this era, the most wonderful and important in the world's history, was ushered in, it was, as aforetime, by the intervention of miracles—now miracles of grace. The occasion demanded them and was worthy of them. Hence appeared in our world a divine Redeemer, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of the people; he being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, was taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden of it.”

And why should all this be doubted or called in question by any? Is it not in harmony with the divine procedure from the beginning? If he wrought miracles to produce a material kingdom, why might he not do the same to institute a spiritual kingdom? If he resorted to a miracle to set in order physical laws, why might he not to establish the higher laws of truth and righteousness? If he put forth a miracle to beautify the earth

with vegetation, why might he not to adorn it with plants of grace and flowers of holiness? If he performed a miracle to bring man into being in an earthly form, why not to elevate him to a celestial state and sphere of existence? If he wrought a miracle to people this lower world with animal tenants, why not to people heaven with immortal beings? In a word, why should it be thought a thing incredible that the grandest epoch in the moral world, involving the eternal welfare of the last and highest race placed on this globe, should have been inaugurated by this marked demonstration of almighty power and unsearchable grace! So far, then, as the science of nature can speak, its testimony is clearly in favor and support of the wonderful events and miraculous works of which we read in the gospel.

#### CHARACTER OF THE EVIDENCE FOR CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

That the miracles related in the gospel were actually performed by Jesus of Nazareth is a matter of fact, and is capable of being proved by evidences such as prove any other facts or deeds or historic events, namely, by the testimony of competent and credible witnesses. Now for estimating the value of such testimony the wisdom and experience of judges and lawyers have laid

down the following rules: 1. Anything capable of being proved by mere testimony is credible in proportion to the opportunity which the witness had of being well informed concerning it himself and his freedom from any bias that might make him wish to impose upon others. 2. The more persons there are who relate the same transaction, of which they are equally credible witnesses, the stronger is the evidence for it. 3. The proper mark or criterion of the truth of a story, being related by a number of independent witnesses of full credit, is their complete agreement in the principal facts or arguments and their disagreement with respect to things of less consequence, or at least variety or diversity in their manner of relating the same thing.

Now, judged by all these forensic rules, the testimony that goes to prove the truth and reality of Christ's miracles is the most satisfactory and complete that can be given or desired. 1. The witnesses were present and had the most favorable opportunity possible to see them performed and afterwards to observe and test their effects; and there existed no promise or prospect of any earthly advantage to bias their minds or to induce them to depart from the truth. 2. These witnesses were not two or three only, but many, even multitudes, including both sexes and every grade

and office in society. 3. And the testimony of all, as far as it has reached us, is absolutely *one* in regard to the principal facts, while according to their several points of view they vary more or less as to the number and order of the mere incidental circumstances which they relate; but even in this variation there is no contradiction. Thus, tested by the severest judicial rules, the evidence we have for the miracles of Christ is such as would decide the most momentous issue in the most cautious and rigid court of justice. It would determine every fair and impartial judge whether he should give sentence for life or for death.

#### THE CRITERIA OF CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

The measure and kind of evidence that will carry conviction in regard to any natural act or event will not suffice, with many, to command belief in that which is supernatural. Hence disbelievers in the supernatural portions of the gospel claim that an act or event, to be received and credited as a true miracle, must possess all the following criteria, or characteristics.

I. A miracle, if performed, must be wrought for an important end, and one worthy of its author.

The miracles of Christ were performed to attest his divine commission, to alleviate human misery, and to illustrate sacred truths.

2. An act to be accounted and received as a miracle must be instantaneously and publicly performed.

In this very manner the miracles of Jesus were performed. He spake the word, and immediately the sick were healed, the lame walked, and the blind received sight, and this in the presence of enemies as well as friends, at marriage and funeral gatherings, in the synagogues, and at the public festivals.

3. An act to be accepted as a miracle must be such as the senses of men can clearly and fully judge of.

And such were the miracles of Jesus Christ; the eyes and ears and hands of those present could test them; the leper cleansed, the paralytic nerved with strength, and the dumb speaking were facts of which the senses of all could judge and decide.

4. An act to be a true miracle must be independent of second or natural causes.

The miraculous deeds of the Saviour were altogether independent of such causes; to still the tempest, to walk upon the sea, and to raise the dead to life again were acts which no natural or second causes were adequate to accomplish or in any way account for.

5. An event so extraordinary as a miracle could hardly fail to be attested by some abiding

memorial or public monument of its performance, dating from the time it took place.

The miracles of Christ are attested by just such evidence. Many of the *subjects*, or those who experienced the benefit of them, long survived, and thus remained among men living and public monuments of their reality. The *gospel narratives* of these miracles were also written and published in the midst of the very people who had witnessed them, and these have remained public memorials of them through all generations since. The *Lord's Supper*, likewise, was instituted in commemoration of his crucifixion, and as a sacred memorial of his dying love has ever since been devoutly observed in every land by all his followers. And shortly after his resurrection the sacred *day of rest* was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, as an abiding monument of that, the greatest of all miracles.

Thus we find that the mighty works and signs wrought by our blessed Lord are marked by every criterion and possess every characteristic which even a skeptic can claim for what he would accept as true miracles.

#### WITNESSES FOR THE GREATEST OF GOSPEL MIRACLES.

Of all the miracles of the gospel the most re-

markable and stupendous, as just observed, is the resurrection from the grave of Christ himself. This miracle being proved, all his other miracles are proved and his divine mission and authority for ever established.

That Jesus Christ was crucified, and that he DIED upon the cross and was BURIED, are facts which no intelligent person, whether a Christian or an infidel, now questions. The evidence for all this is too manifold and clear to be doubted, for the chief rulers of the Jewish nation and the Roman governor himself were parties concerned. That he actually and truly died we have both natural and official proof of the most conclusive character. Not only did he hang upon the cross in extreme agony through six long hours, but his side was pierced with a spear, inflicting a mortal wound which brought forth both blood and water. The soldiers who guarded his cross were fully convinced that he was dead already, and for this reason they brake not his legs as they did those of the thieves crucified with him. And Pilate, not until assured by the centurion that he was dead past all doubt would he allow his body to be taken down. His enemies, too, the chief priests and Pharisees, were fully satisfied that he had expired. And even his friends, who clung to him to the last, knowing that he was dead, wound him



up in linen cloth, as was the custom of their nation, and laid him in the cold sepulchre, which they closed with a great stone; and there, under the seal and guard of the governor, he remained from the evening of Friday until the morning of the first day of the next week. That Christ died and was buried, therefore, is an indisputable fact.

That he REVIVED and ROSE again and showed himself alive after his passion is also a fact established by many and infallible proofs. Eleven times, it is recorded, did he appear to the disciples in various ways and at different times and places. He was seen of them at all hours—early in the morning, during the day, and in the evening. He met with them in localities widely distant—in the garden, in the chamber at Jerusalem, on the road to Emmaus, on a hill in Galilee, by the Sea of Tiberias, and on the Mount of Olives. He ate and drank and conversed with them. He allowed them to embrace his feet and pay to him the homage of their love. He exhibited to them the print of the nails in his hands and the wound of the spear in his side. He invited them to examine and feel his person, and even to put their fingers into his yet unclosed wounds, in order to remove every shade of doubt from their minds. Such were the numerous and differing and abundant proofs he gave of his

*resurrection*—proofs that rendered it impossible that they should be either deceived or mistaken.

That the disciples were thoroughly *convinced* and fully *believed* that Christ died and rose again there can be no doubt, for of this they gave the most unquestionable proof in the power of human beings to offer. Influenced by the most unshaken confidence, they laid aside every other occupation and interest and devoted themselves for life to proclaim the interesting and momentous event to the world. Voluntarily, and without hope or prospect of any temporal reward or advantage, they exposed themselves to toil and privation, to hatred and reproach, to carry the glad tidings to as many of their fellow-creatures as they could reach. They hesitated at no sacrifice, they excused themselves from no labor or pains, they shrank from no dangers or terrors, in doing this. They persisted in their assertion that "Christ was risen indeed," in the face of all manner of violence and persecution, and at last cheerfully sealed their testimony with their blood. And in view of all this who can question their full conviction and unshaken faith?

Hume, an English skeptic, having made the assertion that no amount of testimony was sufficient to establish such an event as the resurrection, Dr. Paley replied to him in the following

striking words: "If twelve men, whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes, and in which it was impossible they could be deceived; if the governor of the country, hearing a rumor of this account, should call these men into his presence and offer them a short proposal—either to confess the imposture or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse with one voice to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case; if this threat was communicated to them separately, yet with no different effect; if it was at last executed; if I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burned, or strangled rather than give up their account; still, if Mr. Hume's rule be my guide, I am not to believe them. Now I undertake to say that there exists not a skeptic in the world who would not believe them or who would defend such incredulity."

#### HISTORIC EVIDENCE FOR CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

The history of Christ's ministry and resurrection, and of the labors and sacrifices of his disciples in publishing it, comes down to us in the writings of no less than *seven* different credible authors—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Pe-

ter, and James. The narratives and epistles of these were penned at different dates, in widely-separated localities, and without any concert; yet when brought together and compared they are found to agree in every essential point. They have been subjected to a severity of criticism and scrutiny which have been applied to no other historical documents in existence, and have come out of the ordeal with their genuineness unshaken and their veracity thoroughly established.

For the *authenticity* of these sacred books we have an unbroken chain of evidence. From the very time that they were written down to our own they have been recognized and quoted as authentic narratives and epistles. Clement, bishop of Rome, wrote an epistle to the church at Corinth while the apostle John was yet living, in which he makes quotations from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and also from the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and James. Barnabas, a very few years later, wrote an epistle in which are found quotations from the first three Gospels and a reference to the fourth. Next we have the Epistle of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, in which he cites all the four Gospels and refers to Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Polycarp, who was personally intimate with the apostle John, wrote a

letter to the Philippians, in which he refers to Paul's Epistle to that church, quotes the first three Gospels and refers to the fourth, and also quotes passages from the Acts and from the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and Jude. Irenæus, a pupil of Polycarp, cites passages from all the books of the New Testament. Papias, a pupil of those who had listened to the apostles, composed a Harmony of the four Gospels. Tertullian, writing from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years after the Gospels had been published, with full access to proofs of their genuineness, supplies us with a brief abstract of nearly all the books of the New Testament, which proves that those books are precisely the same as those we now have. Descending further with time, corroborative authorities become too numerous to be named. Such is a short summary of the historic evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of the narratives of the life of Christ and of the epistles of the first preachers of the gospel.

It must be manifest hence to every unprejudiced and candid mind that, if we have any authentic and reliable records of the past, those of the New Testament are such; and that, if the acts or events recorded in any ancient history are to be received, the acts and events related in the Christian Gospels and Epistles are to be received

with unhesitating confidence. We cannot reject these without also casting aside all history for the same reason. But no man of sense does this or thinks of doing it.

Secular history is read with general interest because it is generally believed. The great events, great actors, and great deeds which it relates are regarded and accepted as unquestionable facts. History tells us that there were such cities as Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre, and describes their extent, wealth, and grandeur; and though every vestige of their magnificence had disappeared from the face of the earth twenty centuries ago, yet we do not doubt that there were such cities. Xenophon relates that Alexander conquered Persia, Julius Cæsar that he invaded Britain, and Josephus that Herod reigned over Judæa; and we never think of questioning the truth of these events. History relates the fame of Demosthenes as an orator, of Virgil as a poet, and of Cicero as a statesman; and no scholar doubts either the existence or the celebrity of these characters. Pliny mentions and describes a terrific eruption of Vesuvius in the first century, which overwhelmed the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and Ammianus a fearful earthquake in the fourth century that violently shook the greater part of the Roman world; and no one disputes the truthfulness

of these statements. Tycho Brahé relates that one night, in 1572, he saw a star flash forth in great brilliancy in the constellation of Cassiopeia, which, after the lapse of some eighteen months, utterly vanished; and Brunouski that, in 1606, he observed a similar star in Ophiuchus, which sparkled with an interchange of colors like a diamond, and after shining for a whole year faded and died away. Neither of these stars had been observed before and neither of them has been seen since; and yet, exceptional as were these occurrences, none of our astronomers doubt the truth of the account given of them. Such is the general faith of men in secular history.

Now none of the historians who relate the above facts, nor any other historians, ever gave such decisive proofs of their truthfulness and honesty as did the disciples of Jesus, none of their works have been so closely and repeatedly studied, none subjected to such severe criticism, and none have sustained such vigorous ordeals as the Gospels and Epistles, and none of them are supported by corroborations so numerous and diversified as are these sacred documents. If, therefore, any history in existence is worthy of faintest credit, surely the history which has come down to us from the pens of the evangelists and apostles, recording the ministry, the miracles, and the resur-

rection of Jesus Christ, is entitled to our unqualified confidence and faith.

#### THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST AN EVIDENCE FOR HIS MIRACLES.

If any further argument need be offered in proof of the gospel miracles we have it in the life and character of Him who wrought them. The personal character which Christ sustained and the divine doctrine which he taught were worthy of the seal of the miracles which are ascribed to him. That was a sound argument which Nicodemus employed in his address to the Saviour, and all the ages have felt its force and reëchoed its sentiment: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." And that God *was with* HIM as with no other is what he claimed and what he abundantly proved. His pure, wise, and sinless life, from its beginning to its close, was a demonstration of it. Never man spake and never man lived as he did. This stands confessed alike by friend and foe. He was the same in life as in doctrine—holy, harmless, and undefiled. By his daily conduct as well as by his words he rebuked all that was ungodly, impure, and false among men. He was ever wise and calm and consistent. He never had to retract



a word or regret a deed or to ask pardon of God or man. Intellectually and morally, socially and personally, in relation to his kindred or disciples, to the friends or the enemies of his ministry, he ever rose to the highest idea that we can form of a perfect man. He was generous in the midst of the selfish, upright in the midst of the dishonest, pure in the midst of the sensual, and wise far above the wisest of earth's sages or prophets. His love for sinful man never wavered and his devotion to the Holy Father never flagged or fluctuated. At all times and in all places we find him the same meek, pure, wise, and godlike Being.

But, to avoid all suspicion of bias or partiality, we let those speak of his life and character who cannot be charged with either, and of these the competency of the following as judges will not be questioned.

Goethe, who characterizes himself as a decided non-Christian, says, "The human mind, no matter how much it may advance in intellectual culture and in the extent and depth of the knowledge of nature, will never transcend the height and moral culture of Christianity as it shines and glows in the person of Jesus Christ."

Rousseau: "I confess that the purity of the gospel has its influence on my heart. Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime

should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history it contains should be himself a mere man? What sweetness, what purity, in his manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die without weakness and without ostentation? If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

Strauss: "Jesus represents within the sphere of religion the culmination point, beyond which posterity can never go, yea, which it cannot even equal. He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thoughts."

Renan: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

Such being the *character* of Jesus, his enemies being judges, we cannot but accept his word and admit his miracles.

## PART III.

## NATURAL LAWS AND ANSWER TO PRAYER.

PRAYER is the appeal of weakness to strength, of indigence to sufficiency, of guilt to mercy. In other words, prayer is a sense of want addressed humbly and devoutly to God in hope of relief. The act of praying, therefore, implies three things: belief in the presence and agency of God in the world, confession of dependence on him, and faith in his power to grant what is asked for. Hence prayer is a most solemn act of worship.

## PRAYER A DUTY AND A PRIVILEGE.

In the Scriptures we are taught that it is God's appointment that men should pray for all the blessings they need, temporal as well as spiritual, and that it is his good pleasure to grant them in answer to their supplications. Prayer is a prime doctrine of the Christian system and its spirit an essential element in the Christian character. To every true disciple of Christ it is both a duty and a privilege. Its unremitting exercise insures to him the highest benefits. Accordingly the Scriptures of the New Testament abound with

precepts directing us to pray, with forms and examples teaching us how to pray, and with parables and promises encouraging us to persevere in prayer. No duty is more emphatically enjoined than prayer, and no blessing or benefit is more positively promised than answer to prayer. Thus we read:

“Men ought always to pray.” “If we ask anything according to His will, he heareth us.” “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” “The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”

Broad and general as are these precepts and promises, we are not to infer from them that every petition, though offered in the right spirit, shall be answered in the precise manner or measure or time we ask. We may in our ignorance ask amiss, and infinite wisdom may see that our request is not for our good, and infinite love, therefore, may choose to answer differently. They who pray aright ever recognize this; they believe that God is wiser than they and desire him to take his own wiser way in bestowing what they need. They defer all to his wisdom and love. To such as pray in this spirit the answer is *infallible*: they shall have either what they ask or that which

is better. If the desired good be not granted, or if the deprecated evil be not averted or removed, in virtue of prayer, the privations or afflictions they are left to endure shall work in them spiritual graces for which no amount of earthly suffering can be too great a price. And thus in the end it shall be made manifest that no true prayer has ever been uttered or breathed in vain.

#### OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST PRAYER.

Plainly as the duty of prayer is enjoined, and positively as answer to prayer is promised in the Holy Scriptures, there are found at the present day a class of physical philosophers who do not hesitate to deny both. Prayer, they tell us, can produce no objective results, and its influence, if it has any, must be purely a subjective one; in other words, prayer, when it is sincere and fervent, may work beneficial results in ourselves by calling into activity various good feelings and affections, but it can effect no change, produce no good external to ourselves. This objection is based on the conception that God, having created matter with its various properties and forces, impressed upon them once for all their invariable laws; and that, having thus once set them in motion, they go on for ever grinding out their results with the uniformity and precision of a machine,

with the action of which he never interferes or concerns himself. It is alleged that scientific observations and experiments prove that the forces, laws, and order of nature are invariable and have never once been interfered with by any act or volition of the Almighty. From this it is held to follow that the prayers of men can exert no influence on the Being who created and established the universe to induce him to suspend or vary or modify any of its operations, and that therefore to offer prayer, for any material good at least, is but pious folly: the laws of nature are immutable.

On this ground it is asserted that human supplications, however earnest or persevering, can have no efficacy outside of ourselves, can have no influence to procure any external benefits, can bring no material good, can ward off no physical evil; in brief, prayer can in no wise change or affect man's earthly lot. Prof. Tyndall, speaking with reference to the pious habit of the Tyrol-ese in offering annual prayer for favorable weather and a fruitful season, says, "Science asserts that without a disturbance of natural law quite as serious as the stoppage of an eclipse or the rolling of the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara no act of humiliation, individual or national, could call one shower from heaven or deflect towards us a single beam of the sun." Again, speaking of the

cholera, the same authority says, "To alter by prayer the consequences of this or any similar fact, to deprive by petition a single molecule of miasmatic matter of its properties, would, in the eye of science, be as much a miracle as to make the sun and moon stand still. For one of these results neither of us would pray; on the same grounds I refuse to pray for either." Hence it appears that, in the estimation and according to the teaching of this school of scientists, prayer for daily bread or against famine, for health or against disease, for safety or against destruction, for prosperity or against adversity, are equally fruitless and can proceed only from ignorance or superstition.

If the view entertained and thus boldly set forth by these objectors be correct, then the teachings of Jesus Christ cannot be correct, cannot be true, for he instructs and commands us to pray for our daily bread, for deliverance from evil, for recovery from sickness, for protection amid danger, and for the supply of all our wants. To which, then, shall we listen? whom shall we follow? Those who have slowly and painfully crept up to an imperfect acquaintance with some of the workings of nature's laws? or Him at whose girdle hung the key of all knowledge? Those who by their own confession have no practical or personal experience of prayer? or Him who was the purest and

loftiest moral character the world has ever seen, and who could lift up his eyes to heaven and say, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always"?

As the precepts and instructions of the Great Teacher are in perfect harmony with the law of morals, so will they ever be found with the laws of nature when these are rightly interpreted. What is in harmony with the former cannot be at variance with the latter, for both have proceeded from "the one Lawgiver."

#### PRAYER THE VOICE OF NATURE.

Nature throughout her animated domain is constituted on the principle of prayer, and the whole organization of that domain clearly exhibits specific provisions made for answering prayer. Without prayer and answer to prayer the course of the animate creation as now established would be deranged and fail of its most important ends, as may easily be shown.

As already defined, prayer is the cry of want or distress, whether articulate or inarticulate in its expression. Now the animal world is full of such prayers and full of provisions to insure immediate answers to them. The young brood cry for food or for protection from an approaching enemy; the parent bird hears and understands



that cry and is endowed with an instinct that prompts it instantly to answer it. The lamb bleats, and its cry not only brings its dam to its side, but also causes a more rapid flow of milk to answer that bleating. The lagging little calf about to be pounced upon by a wolf bellows for help, and instantly the whole herd by an impulse of their nature rush to his defence. But for such answers to animal prayers the races would soon die out. Again, the little babe cries for nourishment or for help, and instinctively the sympathies and muscles of the mother are moved to respond to the call in the most tender and loving manner. A human being whose life is imperilled by fire or flood cries for help in his distress, and his fellow-creatures by a law of their being are roused to exertion and to courage that brave all dangers to rescue him. An exploring vessel with its brave officers and crew is frozen up and imprisoned in the distant and inhospitable regions of the Pole; a whole year passes away without a word of tidings from them; at length anxiety and alarm are felt for their safety, and presently the sufferers' prayers, though all unheard, move nations to pour tens and hundreds of thousands from their treasuries to send expeditions by sea and land for their deliverance. Thus we find that prayer is offered and answered in one way or another by

an ordinance of nature among all animated beings, from the lowest to the highest. And can we suppose that the great Father of all, who has instituted this benevolent arrangement among his creatures and implanted in them this instinct to answer prayer, is himself deaf to the voice of prayer when appealed to by his earthly children? Assuredly not; for then the voice of nature would contradict the voice of her Maker and belie his character to the delusion of his creatures.

Man, by nature, is a religious being. "Our religious nature," says Prof. Le Conte, "is a fact, an undoubted scientific verity. Even the materialist must admit it." Prayer is a natural impulse in man; he is born with it. Hence prayer has been so general a practice of the race through all the periods of its history, and is so universal a practice now, that it may be safely asserted that with mankind at large it is the rule and prayerlessness the rare exception. Possibly a few of the lowest and most degraded tribes on the one hand, and a few materialistic theorists on the other, may never pray; but the mass of mankind recognize a higher Being, or beings, with whom they seek communication by prayer. Prayerlessness, like atheism, is nowhere met with except in an erratic condition. In all regions and in all ages the great body of the earth's population have instinc-

tively looked up for relief in their distresses to the Power, or powers, they conceived to be above them. Erroneous and crude their conceptions of that Power may have been, and sensual and grovelling the desires that inspired them, yet in one spirit or another prayer million-voiced has ever ascended from every inhabited quarter of the globe.

Prayer, then, it may be truly said, is "the voice of nature," the instinctive cry of creature weakness and dependence. In pressing need, in imminent danger or helpless suffering, the deepest and the strongest feelings of the human heart prompt to prayer. When earthly comforts flee, when help from man fails, when hope from the world is vanishing, the mind of its own promptings rises above every creature relation and goes out beyond all that is visible for the succor which it needs. In such circumstances the innate religious sentiment of the soul is aroused and addresses itself to God, and looks to him alone for relief. This feeling is universal, is a general fact of nature, as clearly recognizable as the action of heat or the force of gravitation. In every region of the earth, where the Bible is and where it is not, man's heart in one way or another cries out for the living God.

What has been thus so deeply and so univer-

sally implanted by the Creator in the heart of man must be in harmony with His arrangements of the world around him and with the principles of His government over him; for there are no jars, no gaps, no discordant or disconnected parts, in the system of his creation. Inborn religious sentiment prompting to prayer is a veritable element in that system, is an actual fact in the universe; and therefore must be in harmony with the laws of the universe.

If God has so constituted his creature man that he naturally and instinctively turns to Him in his wants and extremities, we may be sure that a due provision has been made whereby his prayers may be answered, unless we believe that this religious instinct has been given to deceive and delude him, given to excite hopes that must end in the sadness of disappointment. But this would be an aspersion of both the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator. In all nature we find no faculty, no organ, no appetite, for the exercise and gratification of which due and fitting provision has not been made. God had never implanted the cravings of hunger and thirst had he not also provided means to satisfy them; he had never formed the lungs had he not likewise created the atmosphere to fill them; and he had not formed the eye if there existed no light to illumine it. So the all-

wise and loving Father of all would never have implanted these promptings to prayer in the human breast had he not also ordained a way and means to answer these prayers. To imbue man with a religious sentiment that quickens him to cry unto God, and then place him in a world under the control of a set of unconscious forces and inflexible laws that admit not of an answer to those cries, would be as though the Creator had implanted in the new-born infant the strong and craving instinct which leads it to seek and to draw the mother's breast, while he had so formed that breast that not a drop of milk could ever flow into it or out of it. Thus, nature herself not only repudiates the charge that her laws forbid an answer to the prayers of men, but also gives assurance that the ear of their Father in heaven is ever open to hear and his heart ever ready to answer them as may be for their best welfare.

Leaving the evidence thus supplied by general principles and the established order of nature, we now advance to an argument of a more direct character, and shall show that the fixedness or uniformity of nature's laws, even as viewed by the materialist, offer no impediment to the answering of the most important prayers offered by the Christian in their full and literal import.

## PRAYER ANSWERED BY INFLUENCE ON MINDS.

The most important and most numerous class of prayers offered by the Christian may be answered by direct spiritual influence on the *mind*—the mind of him who prays or the minds of those for whom prayer is made. And all such answers are independent of all physical laws and lie without their sphere or dominion.

That mind can act upon mind and spirit influence spirit are facts that need no proof, for we daily observe them between man and man. And to such influence the laws of matter present no hindrance; they neither affect it nor are affected by it. When, for example, the gospel preacher or the philosophical lecturer, by his presentation of truths or facts or motives, so far influences the minds of the whole audience before him as to change their views and principles and actions for all time to come, the laws of nature are in no wise involved in this mental change. The laws of matter and the laws of mind are essentially different and distinct, and the action of the latter neither clashes nor interferes with that of the former.

Now, the orator exerts such influence by opening the mental eye of those who listen to him to see things in a different light, and by transmit-

ting in some mysterious way his own emotions and sympathies, his own spirit, into their hearts. The speaker affects the hearer by sympathy as well as by reasoning. And thus one mind has often been observed to sway the minds of a whole multitude as sways the wind a whole forest.

If then the finite mind of man can thus influence the minds of others, much more can the Infinite Mind influence the minds of all his creatures. And as the laws of the physical world do not dominate in the mental and moral world, He can do this without the slightest interference with the established order of material nature. As he is ever present with each human soul and intimately conversant with all its hidden springs of thought and emotion, he can impart light or suggest ideas or present motives or rouse feelings such as may decide the judgment, influence the heart, and determine the actions of any living man, and that without in any degree forcing his will or violating his free moral agency. Now the bearing of this indisputable truth on answer to prayer is very broad, much broader indeed than many seem to apprehend. We shall here, therefore, by way of illustration, apply it to several classes of prayer.

1. *Prayer for purely spiritual blessings.* These are what occupy the foremost place in the Chris-

tian's supplications: the pardon of sin, the growth of faith and love, the increase of spiritual strength to struggle successfully against temptation, wisdom to fulfil all duty, and grace to bring all inward desires and propensities into conformity with the will of God. These are the burden of his prayers and hold the first and highest place in his mind as he bends his knees before the Father of mercies. Now, as all these are gracious blessings proceeding from the Holy Spirit of God and received into the waiting spirit of man, it is obvious that all prayers offered for them can be answered without the slightest intervention with any of the laws or forces of material nature.

2. *Prayer for the conversion of sinners.* This, both in its nature and object, is the same as the preceding; it is asking that the same blessings we seek for ourselves may be bestowed upon others. Answer to these prayers, therefore, involves no more interference with natural laws than the former; neither does it require any infringement on the freedom of the will in those for whom prayer is offered. As we, by instruction or persuasion, can influence the mind and change the conduct of our friends without violating their free will, so God, in answer to our prayers, can by his Spirit enlighten the minds and move the hearts of men, and thus influence them to pursue a course



of holy living without in any sense affecting their freedom. And that such gracious influence has often followed the prayers of Christians abundant evidence might readily be given.

3. *Prayer for the prosperity of benevolent institutions.* This likewise may be answered by favoring influence on human minds. Take, for example, a missionary society. Prayers for this may be answered by influencing the minds of men to contribute liberally of their substance for its support, by influencing the minds of its missionaries as they deliver the message of the gospel, and by influencing the minds of the heathen as they listen to it. So of seminaries, colleges, hospitals, etc.

4. *Prayer for the defeat of the purposes and plots of iniquity.* History abounds with instances where such prayer has been signally answered by impressions made on the minds of men. The inhuman purpose of Jacob's sons to kill their younger brother Joseph, by an impression first on the mind of Reuben and then on that of Judah, was not only frustrated but made to pave the way for that brother's high promotion in the land of Egypt. A tender impression made, in answer to the prayers of Amram and Jochebed, on the mind of Pharaoh's daughter through the tears and beauty of the babe Moses not only defeated the cruel edict that doomed him to perish in the Nile, but secured

for him a princely education, which fitted him to become the future leader and lawgiver of Israel. Haman's plot to cut off all the Jews throughout Persia in one day, in answer to Esther's prayers and fasting was foiled through a powerful impression made on the mind of King Ahasuerus, which took from him even his sleep. Herod's murderous design to destroy the infant Saviour was defeated by an impression made on the mind of Joseph in a dream. The soldiers' counsel to kill Paul together with all the other prisoners was set aside by a friendly impression wrought on the mind of the centurion. The "Gunpowder Plot" to blow up the whole English Parliament was discovered and defeated by a mysterious impression made on the mind of Lord Montague. The life of Howard, the great philanthropist, was saved from the assassin's dagger by an unaccountable impression which induced him to take a different road to church from that which he usually followed. Thus history is full of illustrations of the truth that in answer to prayer the plots of the wicked, the projects of ambition and resentment, the rage of persecution, and the vindictive designs of pride, envy, and jealousy may not only be defeated, but turned to accomplish opposite and even beneficent ends; and all this without any disturbance of the laws of mind or matter.

5. *Prayer for success in worldly business.* This is a lawful and fitting prayer to be offered by the farmer and mechanic, the merchant and the manufacturer; and it may be favorably answered by guiding his mind in forming and carrying out his plans, by inclining the minds of those he employs to fidelity, and by inspiring the minds of those with whom he deals with confidence in his truthfulness and honesty. How much all this may contribute to a man's worldly success needs no proof or illustration. And the public mind, how easily may this be influenced for the making or the ruining of men! The business mind of the country is as sensitive to any rumor, good or bad, as the thermometer is to heat or cold. What trifles often serve to elevate or depress the markets, to advance or reduce the price of stocks, to enliven or dampen trade! A whisper of suspicion is sufficient to create a panic that shall bring a "run" upon a bank or distress upon a merchant-house, and a breath of confidence may serve to save and restore both. It is obvious hence that prayer for success in business may be effectually answered by mere influence upon minds.

6. *Prayer for safety in travelling.* This too is an authorized and proper prayer, and an answer to it may not require any infraction or suspension of the laws which govern the winds or the waves

or any other element. It may be answered simply by an influence on the traveller's own mind, in deciding when he shall start, in choosing his route, or in selecting his train; or it may be answered by an influence on the minds of those who have the management of his train committed to their care—the conductor, engineer, brakeman, switchman, signal tenders, and telegraph operators: how much does the safety of every traveller depend upon the fidelity and promptness of all these! Or, take the voyager. He leaves the harbor to cross the ocean with such a prayer on his lips. That prayer may be answered through an insensible influence exerted upon the minds of those who have the direction of the vessel in their hands, deciding the commands of the mate, the watchfulness of the lookout, or the action of the steersman in a critical moment; or it may be answered by inclining the captain's mind at the outset to steer a few points to the right or to the left of his usual course, and thus sail clear of the iceberg enveloped in fog, or of the ship coming in the opposite direction in the darkness of night, or of the spot where shall descend the destructive thunderbolt, or of the track of the cyclone that shall rush in its fury over the deep. God is not shut up to the performance of a miracle in order to answer the prayer and insure the safety of such as trust in him.

7. *Prayer for protection in battle.* An answer even to such a prayer does not necessarily require any interference with physical laws; influence upon mind, the suppliant's own mind or that of others, may be quite sufficient for this. Battles are fought by the minds of men and not by their bodies alone. The line of march and the position to be taken are determined by some mind; every movement and manœuvre on the field of conflict is ordered by some mind, the direction and moment of firing every ball are decided by some mind, and every step and attitude taken by the suppliant himself is suggested by his own mind. And as the Infinite Mind is present with all, with foe as well as friend, and can by unfelt and unknown influence quicken or retard or change any or all of these decisions, or frustrate the execution of them by haste or indecision, by dejecting the hearts of the brave with sudden terror or rendering the hand of the strong weak and trembling in the decisive moment—as all this is quite possible to Him, it is obvious that he can with infinite ease answer the prayer of the devout soldier and bring him unharmed out of the hottest of the conflict without deflecting a ball or shivering a sword contrary to the laws of nature.

Many well authenticated facts might readily be adduced to show how an overruling providence

influences and directs the minds of men when they least think of it, but we confine ourselves to a single instance. In our own Revolutionary War, during the two days' skirmishing which immediately preceded the battle of Brandywine, the following startling incident occurred: "We had not lain long," relates an officer in the English army, "when a rebel hussar, followed by an officer dressed in dark green, mounted on a bay horse, pressed within a few hundred feet of my right flank, not perceiving us. I ordered three good marksmen to steal near and fire at them; but the idea disgusting me, I recalled the order. The hussar in returning made a circuit, but the other passed within a hundred yards of us, upon which I advanced from the woods towards him. Upon my calling he stopped; but after looking at me he proceeded. I again drew his attention and made signs to him to stop, levelling my piece at him, but he slowly cantered away. I was within a distance that I could have lodged half a dozen balls in him before he could be out of my reach; I had only to determine. But it was not pleasant to fire at the back of an individual coolly doing his duty, so I let him alone. The next day I learned through a surgeon who had been dressing the wounds of some rebel officers that the individual I had thus spared was none other than *Gen. George*

*Washington* himself. And I am not sorry that I did not know at the time who he was."\* How remarkable is all this! Here, by a mere mental impression, a veteran officer is once and again led to act contrary to the common usage of war and to spare an enemy who was reconnoitring his own position. But what issues hung upon that unaccountable impression! Had *Washington* then fallen what had been the end of the Revolutionary struggle, or what had been the subsequent condition of this country? In all probability something very different from what its actual history has been.

8. *Prayer for recovery in sickness.* The prayer of faith in such a condition, the Scripture assures us, availeth much, and, without "depriving one miasmatic molecule of its properties" by a miracle, may be answered in various ways.

In answer to such a prayer the physician's mind, in the exercise of his professional knowledge and experience, may be guided to a correct judgment or diagnosis of the disease and to the best remedy for it, and thus be enabled, through the use of natural means, to restore his patient to health again.

In answer to the prayer of the sick the Holy Spirit may beget in him a trusting and hopeful

\* Major Ferguson's "Private Letters."

frame of mind, which in the judgment of medical authorities is always helpful to recovery.

In answer to prayer, when all symptoms are discouraging, the divine Spirit may produce in the sufferer a calm resignation to the will of God which never fails to lighten and relieve his burden, whatever his affliction may be.

In answer to prayer the Spirit of grace may inspire the soul with faith in Christ which shall enable the sick to rise superior to all the fears and sufferings of dissolution, and thus triumph over death itself.

Reviewing all the foregoing classes of prayer, we see that the field where answer may be given, independently of all natural laws, is very broad and large; that the most important petitions that we need or can offer may be granted by influence on *mind* alone. And when all such prayers are thus answered how little more is left for the Christian to desire! We see also to what narrow limits the territory is reduced which the materialist can in any wise dispute; nor are we called upon to yield him even this.

#### PRAYER ANSWERABLE THROUGH INVARIABLE LAWS.

The Scriptures teach us both by precept and example that we may pray for material blessings—



for food, for favorable weather, for fruitful seasons for protection from disease and from natural calamities. And we now propose to show that answer to such prayers may be granted in perfect harmony with the workings of all natural laws.

This brings us face to face with the alleged scientific difficulty. It is urged, as before stated, that answer to such prayers would require a violation or suspension of the laws of nature, and therefore is not to be looked for. As these laws are established and immutable, no interruption or suspension of them having ever been known, it is asserted that human petitions can have no influence in procuring such blessings. The silent and undeviating march of natural order, we are told, leaves no room for such answers; physical laws are unalterable in their action, and neither change nor bend nor yield either to accomplish or defeat any result in which the interests of mortals may be involved. Prayers directed for such ends, therefore, are equally vain and delusive.

The general constancy of nature in all her operations is universally acknowledged and acted upon. It is freely admitted that all the forces of nature—gravitation, chemical affinity, light, heat, magnetism, and electricity—act according to uniform and unvaried laws; that on sea and land, on plain and mountain-top, each individual force acts

under the same measures, weights, numbers, and limitations at all times and under all circumstances.

All this is true, but it is only a part of the truth. There is another general fact which is equally well established, namely, that no *one* law or force determines anything that we see take place or done around us. Every change or product or result that we witness in nature is the effect of a *combination* of different forces. A shower of rain, for example, is not the result of one force, but of the combination of several forces—of heat, electricity, chemical affinity, and gravitation—and the action of each of these forces in such a combination is modified by that of all the others; hence we have showers more or less frequent, more or less copious. And the wind: neither the speed nor the direction nor the temperature of this is determined by any one force, but by a combination of causes—solar heat, electric currents, aqueous vapors, etc.; and as the one or the other of these predominates in energy we have wind from this or that quarter, strong wind or a gentle breeze. A tree or a bush or an apple or an ear of wheat is not the product of one force, but of the combined action of many forces; and any variation in one force caused by the other forces produces a greater or less change in the result; hence our crops in

different years vary both in quantity and quality. So, then, while it is true that each law or force is unvaried in its action, yet it produces the same effect only when it works under the same conditions in reference to other laws or forces. When these conditions are changed the effect likewise is changed. And, as these conditions or combinations are susceptible of endless variations, the results may be endlessly varied.

“When scientific men speak, as they often do,” says the Duke of Argyll, “of all phenomena being governed by invariable laws they use language which is ambiguous, and in most cases they use it in a sense which covers an erroneous idea of the facts. There are no phenomena visible to man of which it is true to say that they are governed by any invariable force. That which does govern them is always some variable combination of invariable forces. But this makes all the difference in reasoning on the relation of will to law, of providence to physical affairs; this is the one essential distinction to be admitted and observed. There is no observed order of facts which is not due to a combination of forces, and there is no combination of forces which is invariable—none which are not capable of change in infinite degrees. In these senses—and these are the common senses in which law is used to express the

phenomena of nature—law is not rigid, is not immutable: it is not invariable, but is, on the contrary, pliable, subtle, and various.”\*

In illustration of these statements we here present a few examples of the variable results produced by invariable laws acting in different combinations. “The course of nature,” says John Stuart Mill, “has not been uniform, but infinitely various.” Variation and change are observable in every department of the creation. We speak of the planets being governed by the immutable laws of motion and gravitation, but so manifold are the perturbations produced by their mutual attractions that no planet in the system, strictly speaking, ever twice describes precisely the same orbit round the sun. We are told that the action of the physical forces on the earth has been uniform through all the periods of its geological history, yet how endlessly varied have been the results produced by these forces, how amazing the changes through which it is supposed to have passed!—in its beginning a molten sphere enveloped in a dense atmosphere of steam; afterwards enswathed in a shoreless ocean; at a later period exhibiting continents and islands all clothed with a luxuriant vegetation; at a later period still encased in ice and snow from pole

\* The “Reign of Law,” Chap. 2.

to pole; while at the present we find it enjoying every pleasing diversity of both soil and climate. Well might Sir Charles Lyell say, "Any one who presumes to dogmatize respecting the absolute uniformity of the order of nature is rebuked by geological evidence of the changes which that order has already undergone." Again, the forces of nature, individually, operate uniformly throughout the year; yet by different combinations of these forces we have the cold and barrenness of winter at one time and the warmth and luxuriance of summer at another. The recurrent order of the seasons is produced by invariable causes; yet since the world began no season has ever been exactly like another. The sun shines uniformly and the gases and vapors composing the atmosphere ever remain obedient to their respective laws, but for all this the temperature has often been known to change 20 or 30 or even 40 degrees within a few hours. The general economy of physical nature continues the same, yet one season proves eminently favorable to the development and prevalence of cholera or yellow-fever, while the next may forbid even the appearance of these scourges; or one summer may be marked by a damaging excess of rain and the next by a protracted and withering drought; or one year may be rendered memorable for its fre-

quent tornadoes and earthquakes, while those that follow shall witness none of these terrible phenomena. In not one of these cases is any physical law violated or suspended or modified; all are the results of different *combinations* of these laws.

From facts such as these it is evident that the earth and the sea and the air might be made to pass through almost any imaginable changes; and that the living inhabitants of the world might be subjected to any sort or amount of physical evil or be favored with any kind or degree of material good—might be visited with a drought or a deluge, with fruitful seasons or blighted fields, with an atmosphere that is salubrious or pestilential—without the slightest interference with the uniform operation of any one law of nature. The fixedness of physical laws, therefore, does not, as the objectors set forth, necessarily exclude all answer to prayer for material favors. All the answers which the Scriptures promise and which the Christian desires may be granted by adjustment or combination of these laws. In the endless combinations of which the established forces of the universe are susceptible God has ready to his hand suitable and abundant resources to bring about in answer to the prayers of the faithful whatever change or result He may see in his in-

finite wisdom to be for their benefit without violating or suspending any one law of nature.

ANSWER TO PRAYER AND THE CONSERVATION  
OF FORCE.

Here it may be asked, by way of objection to all that has now been said, "But *does* God ever interpose to produce such combinations? How about the doctrine of the conservation of force? Does not this exclude the idea of any divine agency being exercised in the system of nature for the answering of such prayers?"

Well, and what is this doctrine of conservation? Simply that the *sum* of all the physical energies of the universe is believed to be always the same. Or, to express it more fully, that while the various forces of nature are so related as to be mutually convertible, that is, motion may be converted into heat, heat into electricity, electricity into light, etc., no one of them can make its appearance in a new or different form without an equivalent expenditure of some other force, so that the *sum of all* remains ever a constant quantity. Hence it is inferred that the divine energy can have no place or part in the workings of the universe, that "no personal volition can mix itself in the economy of nature" at the call of any prayer of man.

This objection naturally and at once suggests the question, Is this doctrine of conservation true? has it been proved? "If true," says Balfour Stewart, one of the foremost of living physicists, "if true, its truth certainly cannot be proved after the manner in which we prove a proposition in Euclid; nor does it even admit of a proof so rigid as that of the conservation of matter." This doctrine rests altogether on indirect proof derived from very limited and defective experiments, and the evidence that can be obtained for it in this way is only approximative. In all the experiments ever made there has always been a certain discrepancy between the sum of the force started with, in one form, and the sum recovered, in another form. "Absolute equality," says Javon, "is always a matter of assumption." Such is the narrow and uncertain foundation upon which rests the astounding assertion that the divine agency can have no place or part in the operations of nature. It is not without good reason, therefore, that Prof. Bowne makes the energetic remark, "It is a vexatiously common error with semi-scientific speculators to affirm the doctrine of conservation to be absolute, and then to conclude that there can be no vital or spontaneous agent in the system. The fallacy is evident, for it consists in deducing the premises from the con-



clusion, which in turn is true only on the pre-assumed truth of the premises.”

That the divine will can interpose to produce any required combinations of the physical forces, whatever of truth may be in the doctrine of conservation, is obvious from what the will of man is able to effect among them. *Will* is an acknowledged source of power, and it is an indisputable fact that the will of man can counteract, modify, and direct, to a certain extent, any of the various forces of nature. Daily observation and experience prove that man, by the agency of his intelligent volition, combines and directs these forces every day, whereby he brings about results wholly different from those which would have taken place except for such combination and direction. And how numerous and diversified are the combinations of these forces which he has been able to effect, and how surprising the results produced by them! His steam engines, his telegraphs, telephones, telescopes, spectrosopes, balloons, diving-bells, musical instruments, electric machines, chemical retorts, and a hundred other inventions—what are they? Simply contrivances to produce special combinations and adjustments of the forces of nature. None of these create force in any sense or degree; they only combine existing forces. And though by means of them

he has been able to alter climate, to raise and lower temperature, to increase and diminish the fall of rain, to improve the soil, to multiply food, to banish disease, and to change the face of the earth and the condition of its inhabitants, yet no difficulty or check from the doctrine of conservation has been experienced in accomplishing all this. Much less, then, can this doctrine present any impediment to the divine will.

In illustration of this point we may go farther than anything that man has actually accomplished and yet remain within the limits of what is possible to him. If the waters of the Mediterranean, as lately proposed, were made to flow in upon the lower level of the Desert of Sahara and convert a large portion of its surface into a lake, it would produce such new meteorological combinations as would change the whole aspect and condition of the surrounding region for thousands of miles. Or, what is not an impossibility, if a canal were cut across the Isthmus of Panama of sufficient capacity to divert the Gulf Stream from its present course and allow it to flow directly into the Pacific, instead of turning northward along the American coast, there would follow such a new combination of the elements as would change the present genial climate of the British Isles and Northwestern Europe into one as rigorous as that of

Labrador. Yet were both these schemes accomplished, great as would be the changes that would follow, a Tyndall or a Faraday, experimenting and philosophizing on the forces of nature in New Zealand, supposing he had received no information of them, would never dream that such new combinations had been formed or that the doctrine of conservation had been in any wise affected. All things would continue to him as they were from the beginning. So if the divine will saw fit to effect certain meteorological combinations in order to bring on rain or to ward off disease, in answer to the prayers of a prostrate nation, no experiment of man, no application of his doctrine of the conservation of energy, would ever discover that his volition had been concerned in bringing about the result.

If the will of man, then, with his short insight into nature and with his feeble powers to control it, is able to do so much to direct and combine its forces to bring about different results, what may not the will of Him who is almighty and omniscient be able to accomplish? What combinations and adjustments may He not be able to effect in perfect harmony with the observed order of nature? All proper conceptions of God as an omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent Being bind us to believe that He is present—present in all

the fulness of his perfections—at each point of space and through each instant of time; that He momentarily stands in immediate and active connection with every particle of matter in the universe—as immediate and active as in the moment of its creation. He may therefore put forth an influence among physical agents for their combination and direction beyond the reach of man's vision or sagacity; may determine their balancings where human science cannot trace nor human instruments detect the influence of his power, where all energy and all laws known to man are merged and lost in the divine volition whence all laws and all forces are derived. From the inexhaustible magazine of *possible combinations* the Governor of the world can draw with infallible skill the agencies of his dispensations towards every human being and every living thing. All the energy in operation or in existence in the universe being none other than energy derived from his own omnipotent will, He can with infinite ease, in answer to his people's cry, send or withhold rain, restore health or ward off disease, grant favoring winds to the mariner or fruitful seasons to the husbandman, in perfect harmony with all the known laws of nature. And when we pray for such favors we do not look for a miracle; we do not ask God to violate or suspend or depart

from any of the laws which he has established, but to direct their wonted operations so as to bring us whatever his infinite wisdom and love may see best for us.

#### CONCLUSION.

The laws of nature, then, rightly understood in their mutual influence and combined activity and rightly apprehended in their relation to the Great Ruler of all, present neither obstacle nor discouragement to prayer even for material blessings and temporal favors. And concerning the attitude and spirit of those who represent them as being such we can employ no language more truthful or fitting than that of the distinguished Dr. William B. Carpenter, in his masterly address on retiring as the president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1872. "To set up these laws," he says, "as self-acting and as either excluding or rendering unnecessary the Power which alone can give them effect appears to me as arrogant as it is unphilosophical. To speak of any law as regulating or governing phenomena is only permissible on the assumption that the law is the expression of the *modus operandi* of the governing Power. Those who set up their own conceptions of the orderly sequence which they discern in the phenomena of nature as fixed

and determinate laws, by which these phenomena not only are, but always have been and always must be invariably governed, are really guilty of the intellectual arrogance they condemn in the systems of the ancients and place themselves in diametrical antagonism to those real philosophers by whose comprehensive grasp and penetrating insight that order has been so far disclosed. The order of nature is worshipped as itself a god by the class of interpreters whose doctrine I call in question. The real philosopher is one who always loves truth better than his system."

A few years ago it was proposed by one of this class to reduce prayer to an experimental test by selecting a certain ward in a hospital to be made a special object of prayer and another ward for which no prayer should be offered, and then at the end of a specified period compare the results in deaths and recoveries in these two wards as evidence of the efficacy of prayer. We need not stop to show that such a proposition clearly indicates in its author an utter misconception of both the nature and conditions of true prayer. To test the efficacy of prayer is indeed perfectly legitimate, not, however, in the skeptical spirit in which this proposal was made, but with a humble and honest heart. Whoever shall *thus* make trial of the benefit of prayer will find the most

convincing of all proofs in his own happy experience. *It is good for me to draw near to God* has been the testimony of millions in the ages past and is the testimony of millions to-day, among whom are numbered not a few of those who stand in the foremost ranks of science. And in closing I would say to my unbelieving reader, let him make but the humble and honest trial and he will not long stand in doubt. However inexplicable may appear to him the divine agency in the government of the world and whatever seeming or real contradictions, anomalies, or enigmas he may witness in life, he will soon attain to a consciousness that will brush all these difficulties aside as so many cobwebs that had blurred his vision. And henceforth, in whatever place he shall bow his head in sincere worship, he will find it good to be there. As often as in humble and earnest prayer he shall seek light in the perplexities of duty or help in the hard battle of life, there will come from above a beam that shall illumine his pathway and grace that shall strengthen and nerve him for the conflict. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

## PART IV.

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

THE resurrection of the dead is a doctrine of pure revelation. Natural reason did not discover or conceive it. The nearest approach to it ever made by heathen sages appears to be the notion of metempsychosis, or the passing of the souls of deceased men into the bodies of various animals—a condition which was to them not so much an object of hope as of dread, being a state of indefinite purgatory. Of resurrection proper they had no conception; and when it was announced to some of the wisest among them, they deemed it a thing incredible and scoffed at it.

This doctrine is peculiar to the inspired Scriptures. Intimations of it, and even some general statements concerning it, are to be found in the Old Testament. As on many other truths, more and more light was given on this subject with the progressive development of God's will and purpose concerning men. Job, David, Isaiah, and Daniel successively speak of it in terms ever growing more lucid and definite. And towards the close of that ancient dispensation we find that it was a



prevailing doctrine among the Jews. But its more particular and full revelation was reserved to be made by Christ and his apostles, who taught it in positive and explicit terms, such as the following:

“The hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.”

“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Such are the clear announcements made in the gospel concerning the wonderful change that is to pass upon the living and the dead at the last day.

#### DIFFICULTIES PRESENTED BY THE DOCTRINE.

That the dead—all the dead of the human race—should be raised to life again at the final day is an event so wonderful, and to natural reason so improbable, that it has given rise to many skeptical and perplexing questions. It has been asked, When the body has been utterly dissolved and its constituents scattered by winds and waves

to be mingled with a thousand other substances, how is it possible that they should be re-collected and reorganized again? When the materials composing the body have gone to nourish plants and trees and become parts of their leaves and flowers and fruits, and when these again have become food for beasts and birds and fishes and thus been compounded into their bodies, how can these materials be brought together again and be moulded into a human frame as before? Again, If all its particles could be found and collected, will they be fashioned into a body of the same form and features as that buried? Will the aged be raised as aged, the youth as youth, and those who died in infancy as infants? Again, Will all the matter which at any time entered into its composition during life be employed to form the resurrection body, or only that which belonged to it at the moment of death? And again, If the same particles of matter have at successive periods formed part of two different bodies, as in the case of a cannibal and his victim, how can those self-same particles be given to each of these claimants? These and other like questions will be best answered by presenting the exact statements of Scripture concerning the resurrection body in connection with the physiological facts ascertained respecting the composition, growth, and decay of

the present body. This we shall now attempt to do.

#### HOW THE BODY IS BUILT UP.

All the substances which enter into the composition of our frames come from without. The body, admirable as all its parts and functions are, can create nothing; every ounce added to its weight and every inch added to its dimensions, from earliest infancy to full-grown manhood, are produced by materials drawn from the external world. And now let us glance at the several ways in which these are obtained and employed to build it up and to preserve it in health, vigor, and activity.

The first and most obvious supply of materials for building up the body comes from the *food* we eat. This, after undergoing the chemical changes produced in the stomach, is carried forward into the intestines, and in passing through these the nutritive parts are strained off by innumerable minute orifices, called *lacteals*, which, through their hair-like pipes and by successive steps, unite their contents and discharge them by the thoracic duct into the jugular vein to mingle with the blood, which is carried directly into the heart, to be propelled by this through the arteries to every member and portion of the body to supply the material necessary for their construction and per-

petual repair. Under the mysterious guidance of the vital principle every particular part of the body selects from this nourishing blood the special chemical compounds which are required for the formation of its own peculiar substance or for the discharge of its special function. Thus the bones specially select and appropriate phosphate of lime, while the muscles take phosphate of magnesia and phosphate of potash. The cartilages choose and grow on soda; the teeth extract fluorine; the hair, skin, and nails select and almost monopolize the silica; the eye and the hair extract the iron to form their pigment; the brain gathers largely of the phosphorus. Thus to each part of the body certain chemical substances seem to be most specially appropriate, and to each part a peculiar and special power has been given of selecting from the common source of supply those materials which suit it best to work withal.

But what we eat and drink is not the only supply; the *atmosphere* likewise furnishes a large amount of the elements necessary to build up and sustain the body. This we obtain by the act of breathing. A man of average size, say weighing 154 lbs., with every inspiration draws into the lungs about one pint of air; and taking the average of inspirations at 18 to a minute, he will thus inhale 3,000 gallons of atmosphere every twenty-

four hours. The air thus taken in after a brief interval is thrown out again directly from the lungs and indirectly from the pores of the skin, but from both these in an altered condition, now containing a much larger amount of both watery vapor and carbonic acid than when it entered. The skin alone exhales in insensible perspiration from one and a half to two pounds and the lungs something over one pound of water every twenty-four hours; and during the same period from one to three pounds, according to circumstances, of carbonic acid are given off from both the lungs and the pores. These two processes, inhalation and exhalation, go on without intermission both when we are awake and when we are asleep.

From the air inhaled the lungs extract from one-seventh to one-fifth of its oxygen, a quantity equal in weight to about one-fourth that of the whole amount of food taken, every twenty-four hours. This oxygen combines directly with the constituents of the blood in the lungs, and is then carried with the ceaseless current of the arteries to every portion and particle of the body to help build up the solid substance of the muscles, cartilages, and skin. It forms a part of the material of which they are necessarily composed, and therefore is real food, and to a certain extent we live upon it. Only a part of the oxygen extracted by

the lungs, however, is thus used to build up the body; the other and greater part of it is employed for an opposite purpose, which we shall now describe.

#### HOW THE BODY IS DISSOLVED AND CHANGED.

Particles of the substances composing the various parts of the body continually wear out, so to speak, and become effete; these the oxygen, by combining with them, renders soluble, so that they are easily removed by the proper channels to give place to new and efficient particles. If we could look into the substance of the body, we should see that, throughout, its constituent parts are in a state of perpetual motion and change. No part, not even the most solid, is exempt from this. Portions of the substance of the bones, of the muscles, of the heart, of the brain, become changed and unfit for the places they occupy and are dissolved and carried away as waste matter with the blood that flows through the veins, from which it is eliminated by the kidneys and other organs; in the meanwhile the places of these effete particles are continually supplied by new matter extracted from the rich arterial blood.

The particles of our corporeal frame may be likened to "the population of a great city, who are ever in motion and in change, coming and

going continually, weeded out and removed hour after hour by deaths and departures, yet as unceasingly kept up in numbers by new incomers; changing from day to day so insensibly as to escape observation, yet so evidently that after the lapse of a few years scarcely a known face can be discerned among congregated thousands. Thus it is with the constituent parts of the body. So rapid is the wear and tear of this animal machine in consequence of its incessant movements that the repairs which are constantly called for are said to renovate the whole framework in a very brief period. Every wheel in that short space is removed and renewed. New materials are brought in for the purpose, while the old are thrown away and rejected. Scarcely has the gluten of the plant been comfortably fitted into its place in the muscle, the skin, or the hair, when it begins forthwith to be dissolved out again—to be decomposed and removed from the body. Restlessness beyond our control is thus inherent in the very matter of which our bodies are formed.”

A distinguished physiologist gives the following analysis of the composition, losses, and gains of the human frame: The body of a man weighing 154 pounds is composed of 88 pounds of water and 66 pounds of solid matters. Such a body in twenty-four hours throws off or loses of water,

40,000 grains, or 6 pounds, and of other matters, 14,500 grains, or 2 pounds. These losses take place through the lungs, kidneys, skin, and bowels, and amount all to 8 pounds.

A man of this weight, therefore, in order to maintain his present condition or weight must daily receive into his system of solid food 8,000 grains, of oxygen 10,000 grains, and of water 36,500 grains, which together amount to 8 pounds.

Thus there is a complete change of material to the amount of 8 pounds taking place in the body of such a man every twenty-four hours. From facts such as these it has been inferred by Profs. Johnston, Huxley, and others that the entire body is changed and renewed in a period of less than thirty days. This period, at first announcement, may appear altogether too brief; but if we duly weigh the foregoing facts, it is not perhaps incredible. But if, to make sure that we are within the limits of truth, we allow *a whole year* to complete the change, the rapidity with which this earthly house is dissolved and rebuilt will be sufficiently wonderful and serve all the ends for which we mention the fact.

#### WHAT BECOMES OF THE MATERIAL BODY.

Here let us devote a moment to inquire what becomes of the materials thus thrown off from the



body, materials which once formed parts of its living tissues and fluids and which we regarded and felt to be parts of ourselves.

The *water*, of which some two pounds are thrown off from the lungs and the pores every twenty-four hours, floats through the atmosphere in the form of vapor and is presently condensed into dew or rain to nourish grass and plants, which ere long serve to feed animals and men once more. Thus this fluid, never at rest, goes through the same circle of changes again and again. What circulates in my system to-day a few days hence may flow through the veins of another.

The *oxygen*, thrown off in various combinations with the waste materials, soon regains its freedom and its purity in the atmosphere, where, mingled with the common ocean, it remains ready to be inhaled by other lungs, to pass through a similar round again. It is the common servant of all that breathe or need its services.

The *carbonic acid*, of which from one to three pounds are daily thrown off, also floats in the atmosphere, to be absorbed by the green leaves and grasses; and these, as before, sooner or later, are largely taken into the stomachs of animals to become parts of their living tissues. Thus the same carbon may circulate over and over again, now

floating in the invisible air, now forming the substance of the growing plant, now of the browsing animal, and now of living man, and then return to the atmosphere to pass through similar and ceaseless rounds. What is mine of it this week may be yours the next.

The *uræa* and *uric acid*, into which the worn and wasted muscles have been converted, passing from the kidneys, return to the soil, from which the nitrogen they contain originally came. There they are gradually converted into ammonia, nitric acid, and other substances, such as plant roots originally took up, and which now, re-formed, are ready again to enter into new roots and thus to re-commence the same round of change.

The *mineral matters* embraced in the composition of the body—salts, lime, magnesia, etc., in all about 10 pounds—as they were at first derived from the earth, so little by little they daily find their way back to the earth again. From thence they ascend into the substance of plants and grass, thence into the substance of the bodies of animals and men; and from these they descend, as before, into mother earth to begin, like all the foregoing substances, a new and similar career.

Finally, when the *whole body* dies at once, its gases soon disengage themselves and mingle with the ocean of the atmosphere; its fluids become

absorbed by the soil and the dust of its more solid parts is carried by percolating rains into the streams and by the streams into the sea—all sooner or later to enter into new chemical combinations in the general mass of the elements or in the structure of vegetation or in the bodies of living animals. A duty is laid upon every particle of matter composing our present frame to prepare and hasten to new service as soon as its commission with us is performed. How vain, then, are the efforts of affection to cherish and preserve the fading forms of the dead! Do what we may, they can never long be prevented from returning to the ceaseless whirl of their natural elements. Their destiny is inevitable.

#### SCRIPTURE STATEMENTS VERIFIED.

From all that has now been stated it is obvious that the material elements which compose the human body are in perpetual circulation and perpetual change. Nothing that belongs to it is permanent, nothing is fixed or abiding. All its parts are in constant flux. It is not the same during any two successive weeks or even on any two successive days. It is not in all respects the same on any morning when we awake as it was on the preceding evening when we went to sleep. It will be seen hence that the following state-

ments of Scripture are in perfect harmony with the deductions of science:

1. That our bodies, though fearfully and wonderfully made, are composed of the physical elements which exist around us: "The first man is of the earth, earthy."

2. That portions of the living body are continually dying out and being replaced by others, so that the apostle's words express a literal fact: "The outward man is perishing—I die daily."

3. That we have already put on and put off a greater number of bodies than we are years of age, bodies fitted for infancy, for youth, and for manhood: "God giveth to each a body as it hath pleased him."

4. That neither form nor size nor sameness of material is essential to personal identity; for, in passing through our successive changes of body, we have been conscious all along that we are the selfsame individuals. Hence it is apparent that we may be, and we shall be so still, when He shall have changed this our vile body and fashioned it "like unto his own glorious body."

5. That we have no standing or exclusive claim or title to any of the particles of matter which have served us as parts of our bodies, for they have sustained the same relation and rendered the same service to others before, and may

to others still hereafter. They are neither mine nor thine; nor need either of us regret this, for they are not essential to "the body that shall be." The Scriptures nowhere say that the resurrection body shall be constituted of the identical particles that composed the mortal body; on the contrary, it is explicitly stated, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be;" "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

6. That the power that combines the elements of earth and air into an organic plant, that converts the substance of plant into the flesh of living animals, and that transforms the flesh of animals into the delicate tissues and sensitive nerves of the human body, may carry on the ascending progress still higher and advance that mortal body to an immortal, so that, "as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

#### THE BUILDER OF THIS EARTHLY TABERNACLE.

In organic nature the dominant force is that mysterious principle we call *life*. This is the formative and ordering power in both the vegetable and animal kingdoms. It is plant-life that builds the plant, animal life that builds up the animal frame, and it is this vital power within that builds up and fashions our body. This is the pow-

er that quickens into living substance and disposes into organic form the matter we receive as food. Our food as taken into the stomach is dead matter, and all its particles are dead even after they have passed into the intestines; but when they have reached a certain point in the circulation of the system this vital power in some mysterious way seizes upon these particles and infuses into them its own living properties. And it is this vital power, like an ingenious architect, that superintends and directs the thousand builders who are constantly constructing and reconstructing every member and organ of our frame, selecting and combining the proper materials for each particular part; here building up a bone, there forming a tendon; here weaving the fibre of a muscle, there the filament of a nerve; here hinging a valve, there glazing an eye—fashioning and finishing each with the most scrupulous nicety, and combining all into one related and harmonious system with a skill surpassing all admiration.

Life, then (as God's agent), is the builder of the present body. "Organic form and structure," says Prof. J. J. Murphy, "are the result of this formative principle; or, in briefer words, life is the cause of organization; organization is not the cause of life. Organization is not essential to life. There may be and there is life where there is no

organization." So the Duke of Argyll, in arguing on this subject, says, "Let us never forget that life, as we know it here below, is the antecedent or cause of organization and not its product; that the peculiar combinations of matter which are the homes and abodes of life are prepared and shaped under the control and guidance of that mysterious power which we know as vitality." It is this vital power, this living principle, that all along has given form and features and organization to the ceaseless current of ever-changing materials which we have called our body. In this vital principle we have the abiding and essential force which forms and actuates the body, the fashioning power that lies underneath and permeates the outward phenomenon of corporeal form, and which is the sole element of its *identity*; all else is in perpetual change.

In view of all this it is not inconsistent with nature or Scripture to suppose that, after the substances of our present body shall have been dissolved and scattered by death, this vital and organic principle, *life*, abiding still in connection with the spirit in the presence of Christ—"hid with Christ in God"—may return with him in union with the spirit at the final day, quickened into higher and magnetic energies, capable of drawing to itself from the same terrestrial ele-

ments as before materials in conditions and combinations differing from anything we are now acquainted with, and out of them fashion for itself a new and superior habitation, "a spiritual body," suited to its new and eternal condition of existence. Accordingly the apostle speaks of our being "clothed upon" with "a house not made with hands," which is to remain and abide "eternal in the heavens."

Of this putting on of the new and spiritual body we seem to have some intimations even in nature. We see life in various animals building for itself a succession of different bodies to suit the different and advancing conditions of their existence. The life that has been inclosed in the egg of a butterfly presently forms for itself a more spacious abode in the shape of a caterpillar; and ere long it constructs still another, far more beautiful, in the form of a winged butterfly, gleaming with azure and gold. In the *sitaris* we see life building for itself successively no less than four very differently constructed abodes, suited respectively to the four different conditions of its existence. Again, some creatures there are which are appointed to live in two different worlds, so to speak; and life in these, as it passes from its lower to its higher world, assumes to itself a correspondingly higher and more perfect body. The



*libellula* passes the first period of its existence beneath the water in the condition of an ignoble larva, soiled with mud and filth; but the time comes when it is to be an inhabitant of the upper world, and we see it leave behind its first body and construct another, furnished with brilliant and iridescent wings of gauze, which bear it lightly and happily through the air. The *scarabæus* also spends its earlier period as a hideous subterranean worm; but, destined for a higher state, at the appointed time it undergoes a singular transformation, and we see it, with its emerald elytra, disporting among the happiest of creatures in the pure air and sunshine. The ancient Egyptians, seeing in all this a symbol of the transmigration of souls, accounted this little creature as "sacred."

These facts are presented, not as *proofs* of the resurrection of man, but as marvels of nature that should silence the cavils of incredulity; nor yet are they offered as exact parallels to the resurrection, but as striking analogies, which render that event credible and worthy of acceptance. If we see life in its lowest forms produce such wonders, what may not life in its highest type effect? If a humble worm, living in darkness and buried in mud, is transformed as before our eyes into a beautiful creature, with feathers of silver and wings

of gold, gliding through the air, revelling among flowers, and exulting in the glowing sunbeams, why should it be deemed incredible that intellectual and moral man should know as great and even greater change, and be translated into just such form and constitution as the Holy Scriptures promise and describe?

#### THE PROPERTIES OF THE BODY THAT SHALL BE.

In the inspired Word we find not simply the general announcement that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, but also a particular description of the bodies in which they shall be invested. These, we are told, shall be widely different from those we now occupy. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." That is, the body is laid in the grave a framework with an inevitable tendency to disorganization and putrefaction; but it shall be raised exempt from all liability to disease or decay and remain for ever imperishable. "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory." As soon as the vital spark has fled a process of decomposition sets in, rendering the body offensive and loathsome and making it speedily necessary to hide it in the grave; but it shall be raised in purity, beauty, and splendor, an object worthy of admiration and honor. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." The

present body is a feeble tabernacle, easily injured and ever subject to weariness, languor, and exhaustion; but it shall be raised as the seat of unwasting and untiring energies, capable of bearing company to the immortal spirit, without fatigue in all its services to God and in its ceaseless excursions after knowledge over the broad areas of creation. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The present is an animal body, subject to all the laws of the animal economy, the seat of animal appetites, passions, and propensities; but the resurrection body will be free from all these, a body constituted to be in perfect accord with all the impulses and aspirations of the sanctified soul dwelling within it, fitted to live as spirits live, to move as spirits move, and to act as spirits act. "In the resurrection they shall be as the angels."

Such is to be the resurrection body. But here skepticism may be ready to ask, How *can* such a thing be? How is it possible to constitute such a body out of gross earthly materials? Is not such an idea in contradiction of all that we have ever observed or experienced? Is not this doctrine altogether incredible? To human ignorance it may seem so and yet be true. We may not indeed be able to understand or even conceive how this shall be done, but this argues nothing against

the doctrine. Our knowledge of the properties and capabilities of matter as well as of the nature and relations of the physical forces is as yet very incomplete and very imperfect; but we know enough of both to meet and silence such cavils.

The play and transmutation of the *forces* which actuate and control all nature are very wonderful and past all human explanation; what now appears as motion may presently be converted into heat, heat to magnetism, magnetism to electricity, and electricity to light; or the reverse of all this may take place, or the transmutations may follow in any other order. The changes, combinations, and transformations of which *matter* likewise is capable are past all number and all knowledge. What stands before us to-day as a solid block of ice, to-morrow may be seen as a flowing stream or a flying cloud, or it may exist as invisible steam or in two different and distinct gases. What we handle as solid gold or silver or copper or iron may be transformed not only into molten fluid, but into floating vapors or dancing molecules. The elementary substance we call carbon may assume the form of dull graphite or a lump of charcoal, and the charcoal again that of the brilliant diamond. Science tells us that the pending dewdrop or the tear trembling on the lid may be charged with a sufficient quantity of electricity to produce

a thunderstorm that shall shake a kingdom; that water may be frozen into a solid lump of ice in a red-hot crucible; that a whisper can be rendered audible at the distance of a hundred leagues and the footfall of a fly as distinct as the tramp of a horse. Science makes known to us the existence of matter in conditions in which none of our senses can take cognizance of it; oxygen, though it composes one-half the substance of the whole globe and is one of the most energetic elements in nature, yet is colorless to the eye, tasteless to the tongue, odorless to the nose, and impalpable to the hand. Science asserts the existence of a material medium, the luminiferous ether, and ascribes to it powers and properties which are as utterly incomprehensible to us as all that the Scriptures say concerning the "spiritual body" of the resurrection. It tells us that this ether is of so attenuated and elastic a nature that the granite rock or the hardened steel cannot exclude its presence or impede its motions; that its power of resistance to pressure is upwards of seventeen billions of pounds, and yet we move through it constantly without feeling it; that though it touches us perpetually on every side, yet no touch of ours can detect it; that its vibrations are so rapid that trillions of them enter the eye in the briefest glance we can take at any object; that it can convey a message to a dis-

tance equal to the circumference of the globe in the seventh part of a second of time. In short, science tells us that there is about us light to which we are blind, sounds to which we are deaf, heat and magnetism and electricity to which we are insensible, that a thousand forms of force strike us hourly which our dull nerves perceive not, that a thousand objects and motions encompass us which the narrow bounds of our organs fail to take in.

With such facts as these laid before us, where are the objections to a "spiritual body" based upon the nature and properties of matter? Who is warranted to assert that earthly elements cannot furnish materials to constitute just such bodies as are promised to the saints at the resurrection day? Who that knows the mystic transformations of both matter and force which perpetually surprise the chemist and the physicist will presume to say what can or what cannot be wrought out by Infinite Wisdom in the vast and complicated laboratory of nature? Do not these teachings of science itself go to show that, for all we know, there may be a world of spiritual existences, all clothed in material bodies, around us at this very moment—inhabiting this same globe, enjoying these same scenes of nature—of whom we have no perception; that they may be in happy activity and vi-

brating their angelic songs in ineffable harmony on every side, all unseen and unheard by us? Why, then, should it be deemed by any a thing incredible that God should clothe his redeemed with bodies incorruptible, immortal, and glorious, according to the sure word of his promise? Who shall limit the Holy One, to whom all things are possible?

#### TO EVERY SEED HIS OWN BODY.

St. Paul, in describing the resurrection body, employs this comparison and illustration: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead." In this passage we have three important facts stated.

I. *That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.* The grain of seed sown must decay in the ground before it can produce other and new grains. Its death is a necessary step in the order of nature. So with man. His death, in the order of grace, is a necessary *break* in the chain of his corporeal existence that his renovation may be perfect and complete. This break makes an ab-

solite separation between the corrupt body of sin that was and the new and spiritual body that shall be; "for "corruption cannot inherit incorruption." The old tabernacle, infected with sin, must be dissolved, and a new mansion, "undefiled and incorruptible," reared in its stead. And in this way man shall be redeemed in body as well as in soul from the last taint of sin.

2. *Thou sowest not that body that shall be.* The seed produced is not composed exclusively of the identical materials or particles that composed the seed sown, for the former may be thirty or sixty or a hundred fold greater in amount than the latter. New matter has been seized upon and employed. The seed produced, however, is the same in kind and has been constituted out of the same elements. So shall it be with man in the resurrection. A change will take place. The expression "resurrection of the body" or "resurrection of the flesh" nowhere occurs in the Scriptures. But the promise is that "this vile body shall be changed," and man shall be "clothed upon" with a "house not made with hands," a house made out of the same earthly materials as before, but constituted so differently that it shall be incorruptible, immortal, and glorious.

3. *He giveth to every seed his own body;* not the identical body of the seed from which it sprang,



but one that shall be to it, in all respects, what that was to the original seed; and in this sense, and in no other, it is called its "own body." And as with the seed, so shall it be with man. In the same sense he shall have his "own body." Identity of matter is not implied in the expression, as applied to the one or the other. A man's body is called *his* from its union with his living soul and the mutual influence of the one on the other. The constituent particles of the body, as we have seen, are in perpetual change; but from its belonging all along to the *same soul* and conveying feelings and perceptions to the *same mind* and obeying the directions of the *same will*, we regard and call it the *same body*. So at the resurrection, if we shall be clothed with bodies which we, in this way, perceive to belong to us and to be ours, it will signify nothing of what particular particles of matter they will be composed, whether of those which belonged to it at some former period or of others drawn from the same common source.

The difficulties which to some appear to beset the doctrine of the resurrection arise, for the most part, from strained interpretation of Scripture or from pressing its *general statements* to express *details and particulars* they were never meant to cover. The sum and the substance of the prom-

ise is that at the last day Christ will bring with him the spirits of the faithful and clothe them with bodies like unto his own glorious body, fitted for the services and enjoyments of a righteous and spiritual state of existence. And then shall be brought to pass the word that is written, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

## PART V.

## THE FINAL CONFLAGRATION.

THE globe upon which we dwell in the course of its prolonged and eventful history has passed through many and great and surprising transformations. The investigations of science have brought to light abundance of evidence that its whole surface has been destroyed and renewed again and again, and that all its living tenants have again and again been swept away and replaced by others. And the Holy Scriptures inform us that it is destined to be destroyed yet once more, and afterwards to be renovated and beautified so as to be a fit abode for a population of righteous and happy beings.

The disclosures made to us concerning this final destruction and the bright and blessed economy that is to succeed are, it is true, few and general, yet such as must be contemplated with profound and peculiar interest by every believer in the sacred volume. No details are given, no graphic or picturesque description is presented; and the reserve thus maintained in the information granted bids us maintain the same in our in-

quiries. But while we are not to presume to be wise above what is written, yet it is our privilege and our duty to attempt to be wise up to the measure of what has been communicated in the Word and what has been revealed in the works of our Father in heaven; and it is with this view and in this spirit that we now proceed to consider this interesting subject.

*When* this great and final change shall be brought about we are not told. We have no data in nature from which we can calculate, nor any statement or hint in Scripture from which we can conjecture, when the end of the present economy shall be. The times and the seasons the Father hath reserved in his own power. All we are permitted to know is that that day will come suddenly and unexpectedly, even as a thief in the night.

We are left in equal ignorance as to the process or mode in which this amazing transformation will be effected. We have already seen that the divine interposition was concerned in each of the great upward steps by which our world was advanced from its dead and chaotic state to its present condition of order, life, and grandeur; and hence it is reasonable to infer that the *hand of God* will also be directly concerned in introducing this stupendous and final change. But as to the mode or course which Infinite Wisdom will adopt to

effect it we have no information. It is for us therefore to confine ourselves simply and reverently to what has been revealed.

THE ELEMENT THAT SHALL DESTROY THE  
WORLD.

“The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

That the world should finally be destroyed by fire was an opinion commonly entertained by the ancient philosophers, especially of the Greeks. Heraclitus is said to have “discoursed much concerning the conflagration of the world.” Sophocles taught that “a raging fire shall devour all things earthly and above.” Lucian put forth the same idea. “Coming events in futurity,” said he, “are extremely lamentable; I mean the general conflagration which will consume the universe.” So also Cicero: “It will happen some day or other that all this world will be burned up with fire.” And Ovid has these expressive lines:

“Remembering in the fates a time when fire  
 Shall to the battlements of heaven aspire,  
 And all this blazing world above shall burn  
 And all the inferior globe to cinders turn.”

This was the common idea entertained among the stoics and epicureans. It is remarkable that none of them fancied that it would be by *water*. What the foundation of their opinion was it is impossible now to determine; but whatever its origin, we cannot but regard it as a remarkable coincidence with the sacred announcement before us.

But to return to the apostle's words: “The heavens and the earth which are now are reserved unto fire.” By the “earth,” of course, is meant the material globe upon which we stand: this is to be subjected to the action of fire, of intense and dissolving heat. The “heavens” also are to be involved in the same catastrophe; not, however, the sidereal or the planetary heavens, for it cannot reasonably be supposed that those distant and magnificent spheres are doomed to share in the fate of our isolated and revolted world, of which alone the apostle here speaks, but the aerial heavens, or the atmospheric ocean which envelops our globe. The gases composing this shall be ignited, and so pass away with a great noise or explosion. “The earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” The whole vegetable and

animal creation, together with all the most enduring works of man—his towers, temples, palaces, and monuments—shall be consumed and swept away. “The elements shall melt with fervent heat;” that is, the constituents or component parts of material things shall undergo this change. “All these things shall be dissolved;” not annihilated, but “dissolved.” The substances composing the atmosphere and the earth shall remain, but shall undergo the natural change of aspect and composition produced by intense heat; and out of these materials, we are left to infer, will be formed a renovated world.

Skeptics and scoffers in time past often asked, Whence is to come the fire that is adequate to effect such a dissolution of all nature, seeing that three-fourths of the earth’s surface is covered with the ocean waters, and that to the depth of several miles? Our knowledge of the elements and forces of nature at the present day enables us to return a final answer to this question and to show that various and abundant means exist ready at hand to bring about the destruction of our world by fire at any moment, just in the manner foretold in the Scriptures. A glance at a few well-ascertained facts will suffice to prove this.

Heat or fire lies latent in all bodies, all earthly substances, ready to be called forth at any instant

by mechanic and dynamic means; and as it is one of the most energetic of the physical forces, so also is it one of the most universally disseminated.

The earth carries abundant means for its destruction in its own bosom. It is supposed that one vast and fathomless ocean of *molten and glowing matter* lies hidden beneath the very ground upon which we walk. The whole solid crust of the earth, which in thickness does not exceed the 160th part of its diameter, floats upon that ocean as floats the ice on the bosom of the lake. Let but the balance of pressure and upheaval by which this crust is sustained be suddenly destroyed, and a deluge of fire would overflow its surface and utterly consume everything that grows or moves or lives upon it.

The *electric element* which pervades the whole atmosphere and all the solid substances of the globe presents another agency adequate at any moment to set on fire and consume all that exists on the face of the earth. Both the prevalence and the power of this element are appalling to contemplate. Its energy is all but irresistible; in an instant it rifts the oak into splinters, sets the floating ship in a blaze, scatters the massive tower into fragments, scathes and vitrifies the rock, and melts to fluid the hardest metals. And the ease and rapidity with which this resistless



agent may be accumulated and excited render it still more terrible. "Even in fair weather," says Prof. Cooke, "its presence may be detected in the atmosphere. During a storm, when clouds filled with vesicular drops of water are hurried over the surface, grinding against the hills and the trees or against each other, the atmosphere becomes a vast hydro-electric machine, whose sparks are the lightning and the noise of its discharges the thunder. The wonder is, not that an occasional thunderbolt should kindle a conflagration or even cause a death, but that every storm does not lay waste the earth along its fiery track." Moreover, when we appreciate the vastness of the scale on which the electrical machine of nature is constructed, the thunderstorm ceases to surprise us and only calls our attention to those beneficent provisions by which we and our race are saved by a constant miracle from the fate of the Cities of the Plain. Here, then, is another agency, which, should God but remove his restraining hand, will be found adequate to reduce to ashes all that we now behold or admire on the face of the earth.

There is yet another element of universal prevalence in nature which is capable of bringing about the final conflagration in all its predicted terror and destruction, and that is *oxygen*. To borrow again the words of the able chemist just

quoted, "The fire element in nature is oxygen; this gas is the producer of flame and combustion, and is the mightiest and most destructive of all the elements. Mingled with and restrained by other elements in its natural and ordinary condition, oxygen is bland and harmless, without odor or taste, and seems devoid of any active properties. But beneath this apparent mildness there is concealed an energy so violent that, when once thoroughly aroused, nothing can withstand it. A single spark of fire will change the whole character of this element, and what was before inert and passive becomes in an instant violent and irrepressible. The gentle breeze which was waving the corn and fanning the browsing herds becomes the next moment a consuming fire before which the works of man melt away into air. Now you may be surprised at the statement, but it is nevertheless true, that between one-half and two-thirds of the crust of this globe and of the bodies of its inhabitants consists of oxygen. One-fifth of the volume of the whole atmosphere is composed of oxygen. No less than eight-ninths of all *water* is formed of the same gas. It makes up three-fourths of our own bodies and no less than four-fifths of every plant and at least one-half of the solid rocks. Let, then, this element but be released, let the mysterious affinities that

now hold it in restraint but cease, and the hardened rocks or even the very *waters of the ocean* would supply the fire and fervent heat that would consume the earth and the works that are therein."

The apostle states that at the final conflagration "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." This will attend the event as a natural result. When chemical experiments are made on a small scale with the natural gases they are often attended with loud and destructive explosions. If, then, on the final day, at the bidding of Omnipotence, the oxygen and nitrogen which compose the atmosphere be released from each other's embrace, and the oxygen, according to its greater gravity, sink into a separate layer along the surface of the earth, it is not difficult to see how this part of the prediction will be literally fulfilled. The moment this separation takes place a spark will suffice to set that oxygen in a blaze and envelop the whole terraqueous globe in one immense flame, which will necessarily be attended with a thousand concussions and explosions, loud and terrific, as if the earth burst asunder.

The predicted conflagration of the earth, then, is not a thing impossible or improbable, as scoffers were wont to assert. Science has now demonstrated that the various elements of nature are amply sufficient for this end; that their subtle and

delicate combinations are invested with such tremendous power that they require but the slightest modification to insure a literal fulfilment of the apostle's prophecy. In the light of the present day we see these mighty elements, as it were, stand waiting for God's command as so many ministers of his pleasure, ready to carry out all he has purposed or threatened against this world in which we dwell.

Let not the reader, however, interpret the foregoing statements to say that thus and thus it will and must be. We presume not to say in what way God will accomplish his work or which of the instrumentalities now named Infinite Wisdom may see fit to employ. It may be one or it may be another; or perhaps all of them will act a part in the dread and terrific scene, and, if *all*, then the poet's startling apostrophe will be more than realized:

"At the destined hour,  
By the loud trumpet summoned to the charge,  
See all the formidable sons of fire,  
Eruptions, earthquakes, gases, lightnings, play  
Their various engines; all at once disgorge  
Their blazing magazines and take by storm  
This poor terrestrial citadel of man.  
Amazing period! when each mountain height  
Outburns Vesuvius; rocks eternal pour  
Their melted mass, as rivers once they poured;  
Seas boil, and final ruin fiercely drives  
Her ploughshare o'er creation."—YOUNG.

## CONFLAGRATION OF OTHER WORLDS.

It will be of interest here to state, as having a bearing on this subject, that the fiery catastrophe which thus awaits this planetary globe has already, it is supposed, been the doom of some of the celestial orbs. Astronomers have once and again observed stars which seemed to be in an actual state of conflagration.

In the year 1572, on the 11th of November, Tycho Brahé observed in the constellation *Cassiopeia*, at a place where before he had only seen very small stars, a new star of uncommon magnitude. It was so bright that it surpassed even Jupiter and Venus in splendor and was visible even in the daytime. At the end of a year, however, it gradually diminished, and at length, in March, 1574, sixteen months after its discovery, entirely disappeared, since which no trace of it has ever been seen. When it first appeared its light was of a dazzling white color; two months after it became yellowish; in a few months more it assumed a reddish hue, like Mars; in January and February of 1574 it glimmered only with a gray or lead-colored light, and then totally vanished. Laplace supposed that it was burned up.

A similar phenomenon was observed on the 27th of April, 1848. This appeared in the con-

stellation *Ophiuchus*; its light was reddish in the telescope, and Dr. Preston observed that the reddish color at times increased suddenly in intensity and again as suddenly disappeared. Other observers noticed these peculiar red flashes. Gradually it decreased in brilliancy, till in June, 1850, when it became extinct.

Not longer ago than May, 1866, the splendors of another apparently new star in *Corona Borealis* arrested the attention of astronomers. Anxiously watched by competent observers in separate localities, its changes were accurately noted and compared. It rose in magnificent brilliancy; it slowly waned; it disappeared. The astronomer royal of England expressed his belief in the burning of that distant world. Inflammable gases combining, it has been supposed, gave to it the appearance by which observers were dazzled and impressed.

All the above stars, as far as the observers could judge, seemed to pass through all the stages of a general conflagration. Their sudden outburst on the view, their exceeding brightness at first, their subsequent red and fitful flashes, their gradual fading, and their final extinction, presented all the appearances of burning worlds. And such they are believed to have been by eminent astronomers, as these varied aspects, and all occurring

within such brief periods, can be accounted for on no other supposition. And if this has been the doom of other worlds, why should we doubt the sure word of prophecy that a similar fate awaits our own?

#### PAST DESTRUCTIONS AND RENOVATIONS OF OUR PLANET.

The prophetic view given of the earth's future destiny is in entire accord with the vicissitudes of its past history, and the destruction and renovation foretold by the apostle are scarcely more astonishing than some of the transformations through which our world has already passed. And as it may be to some an aid to faith in the sure word of prophecy, we shall here just glance at a few of these stupendous changes.

If some spiritual intelligence, the denizen of some orb in the distant regions of space, had set out to visit our globe in its primordial condition, according to the latest theories of astronomers he would have discovered it as a molten mass enveloped in a dense and dark atmosphere of steam. If, after the lapse of ages, he visited it again, he would have witnessed an astonishing change; its fiery heat and steamy atmosphere have passed away, its form is now encased in a solid crust, its waters gathered into settled seas,

and the sun and moon and stars shining upon it through a comparatively clear sky. If, after other ages had rolled by, he came back again, he would have observed that it had undergone another and an enchanting transformation; before him would spread out the continents and islands, which he had left on his former visit as barren and bare rocks, now all clothed with a diversified and magnificent vegetation extending from pole to pole. If again, after the lapse of eons more, he returned, he would have marked another astonishing change and found that the tangled plains and mountain forests, whose silence at his previous visit had never been broken by the voice of beast or song of bird, were now swarming and echoing with living tenants of a thousand varied forms. If again, after another long absence, he came back, he would have looked down upon our globe wrapped for the most part from pole to equator in ice and snow accumulated to the depths of hundreds and even thousands of feet, with huge glaciers slowly moving down its mountain-sides, grinding the rocks and ploughing out the valleys, presenting altogether a scene of cold and cheerless desolation, yet one preparing the way for a brighter era. And if, once more, other millenniums having passed away, he came back, he would have found that glacial rigor had given place to



a mild temperature and to pleasant scenes, and that the world, which all along had been the exclusive inheritance of mere brutes, was now inhabited by myriads of intelligent human beings, dwelling in pleasant habitations amid fruitful fields or congregated in large and splendid cities, cultivating art, science, and literature. Now such a being, who had thus witnessed these amazing transformations in the condition of our globe, would have no difficulty in believing that it might undergo other and different changes still; that it might even be subjected to the action of intense heat as it had been to intense cold, in order to advance it to a yet higher state of beauty and perfection. Why, then, should *we* have any more difficulty in believing the same? for all these changes, in effect, are even now before our eyes, having been laid bare by the labors of the geologist. If one order of things after another has thus once and again given place for higher and higher manifestations of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, why should we doubt the still higher and grander and happier transformation promised in the time to come? This our earthly abode has not yet reached a condition of perfection; neither have the resources of the Almighty Creator been yet exhausted. He is abundantly able to do greater things than these.

## THE NEW EARTH AND NEW HEAVENS.

“Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.” Isa. 65:17.

“As the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed remain.” Isa. 66:22.

“We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Pet. 3:13.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Rev. 21:1.

Such are the inspiring announcements of Scripture concerning the bright and happy economy which is to succeed the present probationary and preparatory dispensation. Though the earth and the atmosphere are to be subjected to fervent and dissolving heat, yet we find nothing in these prophetic revelations to indicate that the elementary substances of the earth or the air will be annihilated, or that the earth as a planet will occupy any different place or relation in the solar system from what it does at present. The terms employed by the sacred writers lead us to infer that its materials, though “dissolved,” will remain, and that out of them is to be constituted

the "new earth," which is to abide and continue its revolutions in the great system of nature as before. But its cosmical arrangements, we are given to understand, will be widely different.

"We look for new heavens," that is, aerial heavens constituted anew. What that constitution will be we are not informed. But we know from actual experiments that the present constitution of the atmosphere might be altered, and greatly altered, in various ways. It might be rarified or might be rendered more dense than it is at present, and either of these changes would also change its refractive powers as well as its temperature. Or, the gases composing it might be combined in different proportions, and in this way be rendered more stimulating or more exhilarating and delightful. Or, it might be made capable of suspending less aqueous vapor, and thus render the celestial orbs, as seen through it, far more brilliant and glorious. Or, it might be made to intercept less and to reflect more of any of the various colors combined in the sunbeams, and thus clothe the face of nature in widely different and infinitely more beautiful hues. But what the changes that shall be made will be we know not. All that is said is that we are to look for "new heavens."

"And a new earth." This is all the informa-

tion vouchsafed to us where our natural curiosity would ardently crave for more. No description of either scenery or climate or productions is given. One hint, however, is dropped: "There shall be no more sea." If this expression is to be taken literally, then a new and, to us, altogether unknown and unimaginable series of arrangements and compensations are to be introduced into its physical constitution and moral adaptations, for we cannot conceive how the world could be fitted for organized existences without a sea. But whatever may be the meaning of these words, we are assured that this earth is then to be fashioned and furnished to be a suitable and delightful abode for innocent and righteous beings, and that, therefore, nothing will be admitted into its constitution or arrangements that will be liable to inflict injury or pain or sorrow, and nothing left out that will be essential to innocent enjoyment, to intellectual progress, or to devout and holy services. It will be a secure, peaceful, delightful, and glorious world—a second paradise, and such as shall exceed all our present hopes and expectations; "for eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

## THE DWELLERS OF THE NEW EARTH.

“Wherein dwelleth righteousness.” The new heavens and new earth, then, into which, according to this interpretation of prophecy, the present disordered and corrupt world shall be transformed is to be the abode of *righteous beings*. And who will these be? We have the answer in the apostle’s words; mark them:

“*We look for*”—that is, *we* wait and hope for; a form of expression that clearly implies that *Peter* and his *fellow-Christians* expected to be inheritors of the new earth and new heavens. And upon this expectation he grounds this exhortation: “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that *ye look for* such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

It is obvious, hence, that the dwellers of the new earth and new heavens are to be the risen saints of the Most High, all clothed in bodies like unto the glorified body of the Son of God, all sinless creatures, living in free and full converse with the Being who made and saved and sanctified them, and enjoying the friendships and sharing the delights of angels.

According to the Scriptures, then, we are not to conceive of the redeemed in their final state as mere spiritual existences, dwellers of an aerial

region mysteriously suspended upon nothing, but as having material bodies endowed with organs of sense and perception, having solid ground beneath them and a visible firmament over them, with scenes of luxuriance and grandeur and delight encompassing them on every side, dwelling amid all the warm and living accompaniments of social and kindly intercourse of loved and loving communion with associates, and rejoicing in the sensible tokens of an ever-present and presiding Deity. And it may assist our faith and aid our conception as to how this can be in a material world to remember that all this was originally the happy lot of the first parents of our race; and above all, that the Son of Man, though clothed in a material body and living amid material scenes, yet ever enjoyed the ministry of angels and the unclouded presence and communion of the Father. And *we*, it is promised, "shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Some seem to think that there is a grossness connected with a material body and a material abode that is incompatible with perfect holiness or complete happiness; but this is an erroneous idea and meets with a sufficient refutation in the person of our blessed Redeemer. That he, the divinity, should wrap his unfathomable essence in a covering of flesh and blood and live among

us in the palpable form and structure of a man, and that he should not only have chosen such a tenement as a temporary abode, but that he should have borne it with him into heaven, the high and holy place he now occupies at the right hand of God—this assuredly is a sufficient attestation that a material body and a material abode may consist with perfect holiness and complete happiness.

“When once sin is done away,” says the devout and eloquent Dr. Chalmers, “it consists with all we know of God’s administration that what is material shall be perpetuated in the full bloom and vigor of immortality. It altogether holds out a warmer and more alluring picture of the elysium that awaits us when told that there will be beauty to delight the eye and music to regale the ear and the comfort that springs from all the charities of intercourse between man and man, holding converse as they now do and gladdening each other with the benignant smiles that play on the human countenance or the accents of kindness that fall in soft and soothing melody from the human voice. There is much of the innocent and much of the inspiring and much to affect and elevate the heart in the scenes and contemplations of that which is material; and we do hail the information of the Scriptures that after

the dissolution of its present framework it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure and of its unbounded variety; that in addition to our direct and personal view of the Deity when he comes down to tabernacle with man we shall also have the reflection of him in a lovely mirror of his own workmanship; and that instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and of mystery so remote from human experience as to be beyond all human comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights and those sensible glories which, we doubt not, will lie most profusely scattered over the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Thus at last this earth, which through all the ages of its sad history has been a blot on the fair face of God's creation—the dark habitation of fallen, sinful men, the theatre of iniquity and corruption and crime—shall be purified by a baptism of fire, and by the Creator's might shall be renovated and beautified to be the blissful abode of a virtuous and holy population, all sinless, all happy, all Christlike in body and spirit! "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying" nor pain. And "they

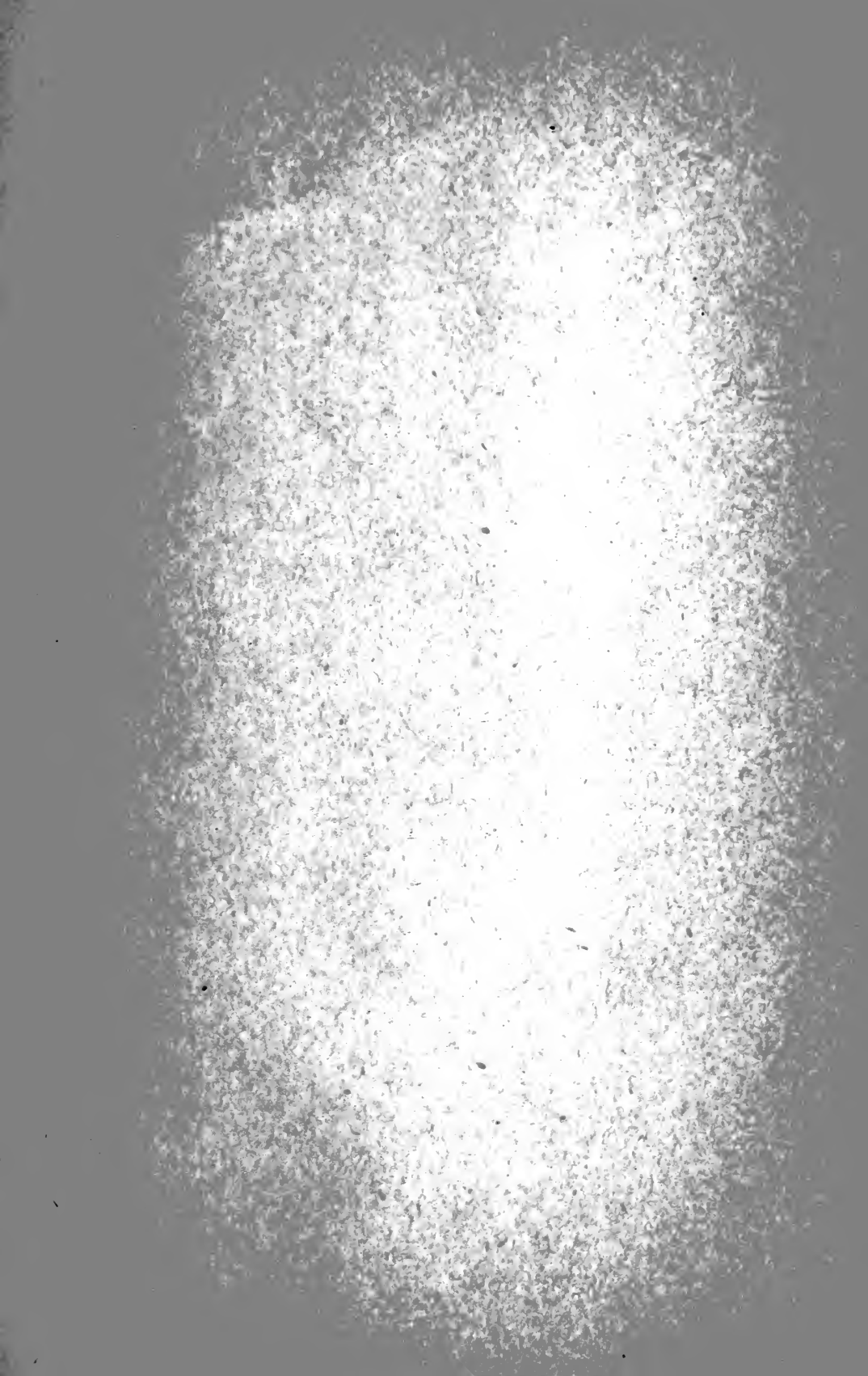


shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.”  
But “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”







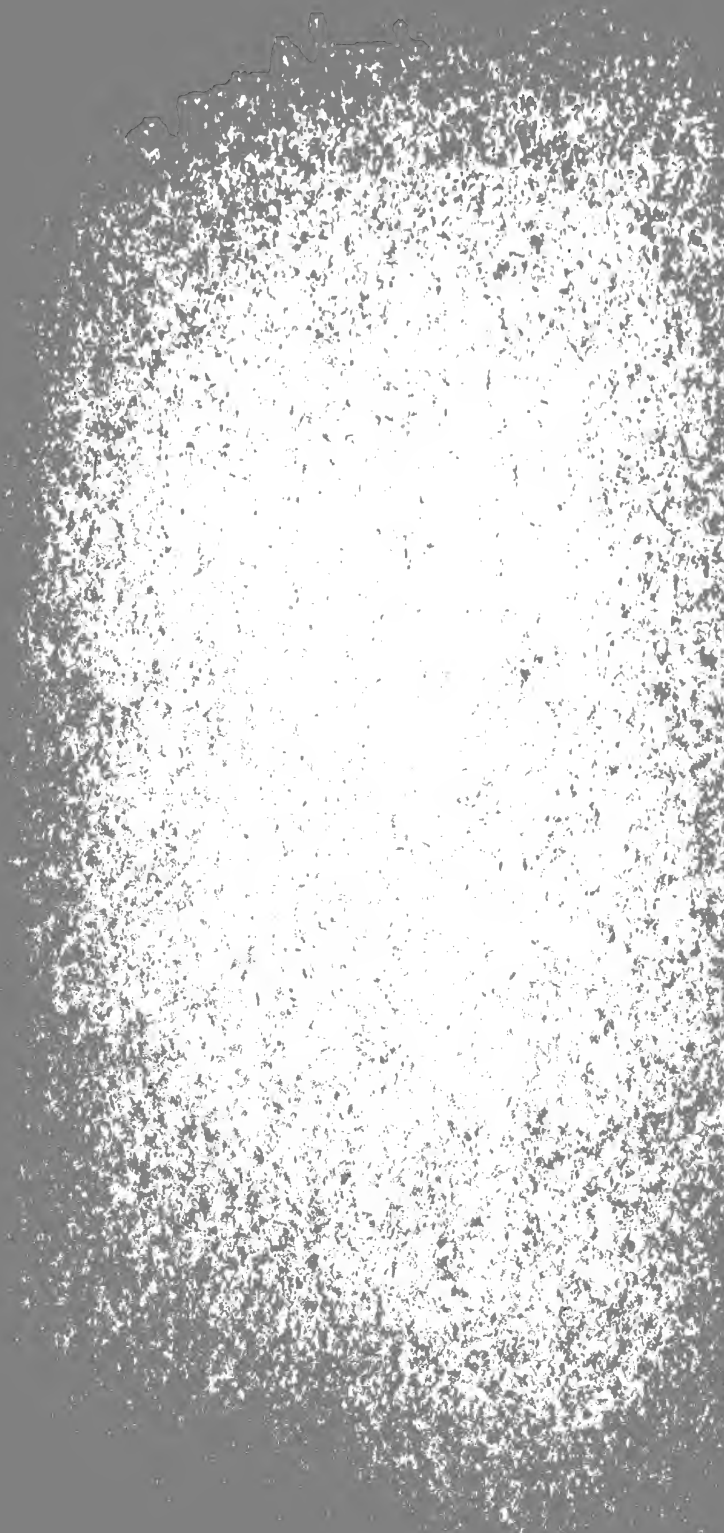


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: May 2005

**PreservationTechnologies**  
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

1111 Riverchase Park Drive  
Greenville, SC 29615-1000  
(803) 798-8800

25  
75  
1A



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 325 757 5

